

A MODERN JUDAS
AND OTHER RHYMES

E. VINCENT



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A MODERN JUDAS
AND OTHER RHYMES

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BY

E. VINCENT

AUTHOR OF "MY FRIEND" AND "DIABOLUS AMANS"

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.

DRYDEN HOUSE, GERRARD STREET, W.

1908

PR
6043
V 744m

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STANZAS TO MY WATCH

Elle aussi, l'horloge, elle est un être.

GEORGE SAND'S *le Diable aux champs*.

S HALL there be odes
To snails and toads,
Lines to a louse seen on a lady's bonnet,
Stanzas to stones
And rags and bones,
And not to you, my watch, a song or sonnet?

—You that I back
Against a pack—
Dials and clocks depressed by wind and weather;
Greenwich may gain,
The sun may wane,
I pit my watch against the two together.

Though I confess
You cost me, yes,
When you were virgin new, a pretty penny,
Of costlier things
Taking to wings,
You have out-throbbled—I mean, out-ticked—a many.

Passion for fame
Has leapt to flame,
Flickered and sunk to darkness in its socket ;
Loves have grown old
And friendships cold ;
But you are still tick-ticking in my pocket.

Had I forecast
Future now past,
Would I have spent nocturnal and diurnal
Vigils and tears
And cares and fears
In forging friendships that were not eternal ?

These are the dear
Things purchased here—
Passions whose price is pain for every pleasure ;
But you that cost
Labour not lost,
Gold unregretted, you are still a treasure.

And if you mark
Hours only dark,
Days only drear, then more, my watch, remind me,
Even in sleep
To Death I sweep,
With less of way before me than behind me.

Oft I deplore,
With men of yore,
Life which is death and more than Death may sunder,
Sighing, " Alas,
How people pass
And things remain ! " Are you a *thing*, I wonder ;

—You with a face
None could replace
Expressive of intelligence and feeling ;

—You with a tone
That's all your own,
Plaintive, insinuating and appealing ;

—You with a heart
Hating to part
From me that leave my watch when I'm forgetful ;
Greenwich may stop,
The sun may drop,
And you if you are hurt or dull or fretful ;

—“ Thing ” ?—you that choose
To gain or lose
Or halt if other than myself shall wear you ;
Do things inspire
Feelings of ire
At moments, and such love as this I bear you ?

Than this—a whole
Separate soul—
What title to continuance can be stronger ?
And for your sake
My heart will ache
If there is hour when time shall be no longer.

Whether that hour
Lour or not lour,
Come with me, friend, beneath my earthy cover ,
You that night, day,
At work, at play,
Stick to me closelier than a wife or lover.

What, will you wait,
The beck of Fate,
And cease not with the one who first possessed you ;
Will you respond
With throbs as fond
To others as to him that erst caressed you ?

Have I not read
When life has fled
Mortal, his watch with consciousness suspended
Hath with the stand
Of silent hand
Signalised moment when his being ended ?

Must I despise,
And scout as lies
In writ or oral histories and romances,
Witnessed or heard
Wonder averred
Of watches worthy of my fondest fancies ?

These from the tomb
Prescient of doom—
Death watches, sound the signal of conclusion,
That man with feet
Summoned may meet
Death, the dispeller of his last illusion.

What is by scribe
Writ of your tribe,
Writ of them all, of few, or one,—one only,
Lying or true
Is writ of you
Watch, without whom I should be lost and lonely.

But if I wrote
All that I note,
Ay, or the half of what I think about you,
People would prate
And pack me straight
To Colney Hatch or Hayward's Heath without you.

CONNEMARA

Hélas ! ce lieu seul est habité ; tout le reste de l'univers est vide.—ROUSSEAU'S *Saint Preux*.

ALL the hours of all the days
Are mine for thinking long in,
Mine for musing wrong in,
Mine for weaving mournful lays ;
O beloved, am I he
That in the summer weather
Hailed the larger heather
When those hours were shared with thee.

All the pleasant times are o'er
With those the dear September
Days—dost thou remember ?—
When we paced along the shore
To the fairies' last retreat,
Where still upon the shingle
Main and freshet mingle
Limpid waters salt and sweet.

All the wayful world is mine
Around my coast of Clara,
Only Connemara
Is forbidden being thine ;

Would I might abandon "all"
In lieu of all in "only,"—
All the full world lonely,
And the great—exceeding small.

All the world and Erin save
Their heaven are mine to roam in,
Not to find a home in
Till I reach the narrow grave,
Then from strangers at my side
My dying eyes will wander
For their darling yonder,
And return unsatisfied.

SAINT HILARY'S TERM

STANZAS IN PRAISE OF THE CHEERFUL

THE cheerful are the sad
That make no cult of gloom,
In colours of the tomb
And weeds and sables clad ;
Nor hinder, since they know
That woe begets but woe,
The glad from being glad ;
And thus they find relief
From vain inglorious grief :
The cheerful are the sad.

The cheerful are the old,
Whose crowning grace is willed
And conquered by the skilled
And calm and self-controlled ;
Happy or hapless youth
Seldom, if e'er, in sooth,
Is found with arms enrolled
Among these warriors prime
In the front ranks of time :
The cheerful are the old.

The cheerful are the proud,
 Whose cheer is their defence
 Against the insolence
 Of pity from the crowd ;
 Whose careless glances keep
 Off curious eyes that peep
 At wounds beneath a shroud :
 Under their armour they
 Bleed in the bloody fray.
 The cheerful are the proud.

The cheerful are the brave :
 Undaunted by defeat,
 In order they retreat ;
 Or lift their flag and wave
 Over their wasted fires,
 Over their dead desires,
 Over their open grave ;
 They measure swords with Fate,
 And dare her love or hate :
 The cheerful are the brave.

The cheerful are the strong :
 The single fort that can
 Be held by lonely man,
 They hold against a throng ;
 Unconquered by the steel,
 Unbroken by the wheel
 Of torture sharp and long,
 They sing to faggots bound
 In flames that wreath them round :
 The cheerful are the strong.

The cheerful are the wise,
The learned in the lore
Of life, which these explore
With wide unshrinking eyes ;
Shall sorrow, which they take
For granted, rudely shake
Their spirits with surprise ?
Why beat the air with blows ?
Why freight the wind with woes ?
The cheerful are the wise.

The cheerful are the kind :
Though pain must come at last,
Why should they overcast
Youth with its cares assigned ?
Their smiles are showered on all ;
And if their shadows fall,
Their shadows fall behind.
Their sorrows are their own ;
Their tears they shed alone :
The cheerful are the kind.

The cheerful are the meek
And good, who did not make
The world and do not take
Its weight on shoulders weak ;
Nor they, while fools are fain
To question and arraign
Their Judge, presumptuous seek
To bring to mortal bar
Pilot of Moon and Star :
The cheerful are the meek.

The cheerful are the true,
And being true can trust
That God is good and just,
Though life is full of rue ;
And be the world awry,
He'll right it by-and-by ;
Why make a vain ado ?
Confronting death and scath
And outrage, full of faith,
The cheerful are the true.

The cheerful are the great ;
Bereft of comfort, wealth,
Friends, future, youth and health,
With brows and hearts elate,
Heroes of longest breath,
Beyond the scope of Death,
Of Change and Chance and Fate,
They sit like gods sublime
Above the wrecks of time :
The cheerful are the great.

THE DAY OF SORROW

The effects of Providence are calculated, not fortuitous.

IT was the day forlorn of sorrow ;
I sate alone in Saint Saviour's aisle,
Near Our Lady's shrine, confronted the while
With yesterday dead, and dead to-morrow :
I sate alone in the day of sorrow.

Then a woman ingenuous, noble and tender,
Stole to my side and kneeled on the stone,
And held my hand in her throbbing own,
Till my dissonant pulses sounded surrender,
And beat with hers in unison tender.

Ignoring till this, the stress of sorrow,
I blest on my bended knees the boon,
Her love, that had yesterday been too soon,
And might have come too late on the morrow,
True to the moment, the stress of sorrow.

I felt a Third, the Being Elusive,
Forgotten in Nature perused, the Supreme
Artist effacing Himself in His theme ;
I felt the most subtle, the least obtrusive
Being of Beings, God the Elusive.

I am 'ware of One in the crisis of sorrow,
Kinder than Fate that defeats our hopes,
Wiser than Chance that blindly gropes,
Reserving Himself, biding His morrow,
Coming in crises of joy and sorrow.

TO MY VALENTINE

Love seeketh not itself to please.—BLAKE.

WITH a dream's remembered words
Waking in the morning hours,
"For the robin is in birds
What the daisy is in flowers,"
Did I hear the piercing-sweet
Note of robin bold, discreet,
In my dreams ? for there he comes
On my window-sill for crumbs ;
Shapely Robin, plump and fine,
You are, yes, my Valentine.

Dapper Robin, while I doat
On your glancing eyes and ways,
Rosy vest and glossy coat,
Find I nothing not for praise ?
Would your daintiness annoyed
Rather starve than not avoid
Saucy sparrows' rabble crowd ?
Don't you think you're rather proud ?
They must breakfast be they swine,
So must you, my Valentine.

Robin, have you seen a spot
No one knows of for a nest ?
Have you found a mate or not,
Whom you love your little best ?
—Not for long, if those that pry,
Busybodies ! do not lie ;
If you mate three times a year,
You are light of love, I fear ;
Still your one is long as nine
Years of ours, my Valentine.

Are you, Robin dear, the same
That as early yesterday
On my sill for breakfast came
Ate his crumbs and hopped away ?
Are you *not* ?—then never mind,
For I love all robinkind :
If I loved in one or two ·
All my kind as all of you,
I should simply be divine ;
But I'm not, my Valentine.

Robin on my lowered sash,
Having supped on what I bring,
Had a bath and made a splash,
Is the pretty song you sing
Just a grace for so much cheer ?
Do you love me, Robin dear ?
Though your silence be not “ Yes,”
I shall like you none the less,
All the same, you'll come and dine,
Won't you ?—with your Valentine.

Do I love you, Robin, too ?
Well, if love is shown in deeds
More than words, I think I do.
Be it who it will that feeds,
Gives you water, crumbles bread,
I'm content if you are fed.
Spend your day in yonder wood,
If you're glad without me, good !
With me, bird shall never pine
In a cage, my Valentine.

While your furtive glances turn
Where your birdship means to go,
Never have I tried to learn
What you wish me not to know :—
Never have I seen the shade
Where your darling eggs are laid,—
Much less stolen, making one
Robin less beneath the sun ;
Boys have strung them up with twine ?
'Twas not I, my Valentine.

Is my care and friendship such
For my fellows—can you tell ?
If I love them twice as much
Do I like them half as well ?
Love for flower and bird and beast
Is unselfish—mine at least ;
Be it little, it is pure,
And will more than much endure :
Therefore, Robin, darling mine,
You're a dainty Valentine.

A BLIND HUNCHBACK

So che pietà fra gli uomini
Il misero non trova ;
Che lui fuggendo, a prova,
Schernisce ogni mortal.—LEOPARDI.

JANET, pick up the needle you let fall
And go, for young De Vyne is come to call ;
He'll stay till Cissa's back : bring tea for two,
Not tannin, mind. The picture . . . It is you ;
I heard your step upon the gravel walk.
I'm sorry that Narcissa's out, but talk,
Although I'm not my sister, for a while
With one that has not Cissa's face and smile,
Which are her mother's, while her voice and tone,
Affected and staccato, are her own.
If you would know another, shut your eyes
And listen to his voice that never lies.
What about mine ?—it is as sharp and clear
As yours is soft and low—when Cissa's near.

I must not speak against her ? since you dote
Upon her, which is what I have by rote,
Her morning portion being to recite
The pretty speeches made her overnight ;
Which even you'll allow is rather hard
On cripples from all compliments debarred,
Whose ears are dinned with how He looked at meeting,
And what He said—poor stuff not worth repeating ;

Or if her He's are out of town, her she's
Will serve her to dislodge a sister's ease,
Until that sister, when her patience flags,
Sinks down upon the rugs as limp as rags ;
For addle-pated talkers can deprive
Of force and leave you less than half alive :
And yet I'd rather listen to her chat
Than see her smiling to herself at that
Or other compliment which she receives
And most devoutly, being vain, believes.

I do not see her smile ? I feel her, then,
For little passes that escapes my ken ;
I have as much perception packed in four
Senses as you possess in five or more ;
And when you fix your eyes I feel your look
Resting as on a picture or a book,
Without your dreaming it's as rude to harry
The blind with glances which they cannot parry,
As to discuss the deaf when they are near you,
Because you know the wretches cannot hear you.
I traverse with my hand familiar faces
And learn if time and grief have left their traces,
Without the voice, which, like an open page,
Reveals your soul and certainly your age.
While you are leaning on the mantelpiece
I tremble for the vases. If a crease
Is in the cloth, or spot upon the steel,
Or tarnish on the silver, I can feel.
The aspect of a room, the number too
Seated therein, I know as well as you.
When Janet leaves a drawer just a chink
Open at night, I cannot sleep a wink ;

While she with all her garments strewn about
Her chamber, sleeps, mouth open, like a lout.

*Why does Narcissa's smiling apropos
Of nothing to herself provoke me so ?*

—Because she's worshipping her own reflection
In other people's eyes of fond affection,
Pluming her little self on those that woo her
And boasting of the kindness that you do her ;
For love, that bows most women to the earth
With wonder and the feeling of unworth,
Makes Cissa proud ;—because she's, say, reviewing
Admirers fresh the ranks of old renewing ;
Or labelling her friends—first, second, third,
According as they came or are preferred.
“ I love you less than Tom and more than Ted ”
Is foolish, and were better left unsaid,
But when you know your place by digits reckoned—
First finger of first hand, or last of second,
Top of the table, bottom of the list
Of friends, so long your presence were not missed,
Do not trip up the heels you come behind,
Do not despise and lose the place assigned,
Do not wax sentimental and beweeep it ;
But when you know your place—poor devil !—keep it.

*I'm talking like a man ?—then the more shame
Is his for using expletives you blame
In one who thus finds outlet for the spite
That's part and parcel of her shape and height.
For crooked back is crooked soul, you see,
And blind of eye should blind in judgment be,*

According to that scientific shoddy
That makes the mind a product of the body.
Still, if, as you suppose, my soul is halt,
And answers to my frame with fault to fault,
When Ciss and I were children, while I wore
My loosely fitting frock and pinafore,
My crooked back was hardly seen, my size
Was called no worse than "tiny," my large eyes
Though blind were beautiful ; and, in my way,
I was as pretty as my sister ; nay,
Don't look incredulous ; but though not kin
In persons in our tempers we were twin ;
Sweet was my disposition and unspoiled
While mother lived and everybody toiled
To make my lot less bitter ; not the blind,
But the deformed are banned by humankind.
Nor is the lack of sight alone the worst
Of ills with which a creature can be curst.
Nor would I for the sake of vision spare
The sounds of my pianoforte there ;
Better, I say, while I can sing and strum,
Better be blind and lame than deaf and dumb.

And are we still alike ?—of course we are,
You might have known it, seeing how we spar :
Our tastes by nature are the same, I should
Lead the same life as Cissa's if I could,
Morning and evening, golfing, boating, skating,
Loafing, sight-seeing, shopping, "titivating,"
Dancing and flirting ; for I love as much
As Cissa can the world of sight and touch,
And more than she, perhaps, thus crossed by Fate ;
So bachelors and spinsters overrate

The "bliss" of marriage, Rechabites are fain
—Drunkards in thought—for cup they dare not drain,
Brotherless children would be one of seven,
The banished love their land and devils heaven ;
For of all furnace fires beneath the sun
The hopeless passion is the fiercest one.

*How do I know things that are not discussed
In common talk and women take on trust ?*
My maid reads novels to me and you'll own
One who knows these knows all that can be known,
By proxy. I frequent the ball, the dance,
The race, the meet, the theatre in romance ;
I, though you'll think I do not understand
Things that I know only at secondhand,
Am learned in the science, not the art,
Of what in life takes far too big a part ;
The love that burns you when you seize its handle,
Say what you will, is hardly worth the candle.
The rapture felt on meeting in a kiss
Evaporated, and a moon of bliss,
Are dearly paid for by the parting pang
By maddening jealousy's transfixing fang,
By the slow fire of care, the rack of fear
And doubt—the torment of the damned, I hear.
Why should one suffer all these tortures ? why
Foster a passion that will surely die ?
But love will take its course,—a hapless takes
The longest : the successful lover wakes
Soon to the dreary sense of disillusion
Out of the brief and blissful dream of fusion
With mind and soul akin ; for knowledge comes
With love, not love with knowledge. Sound the drums,

Play the Dead March in *Saul* ; for love, that young
Died haply hard, the passing bell is rung ;
Or, say, for love grown old—and Love is old
At six or seven—the single knell is tolled ;
Love is stone dead ! And why look mournful, pray,
When what had died to-morrow dies to-day ?
Without ado commit it earth to earth ;
The thing was doubtless rickety from its birth,
And passion is of nature fugitive :
Besides, though love is buried, one must live.
Up with you, mourners, do not look like mutes
And stare like ghosts ; resume your old pursuits,
Your solitary walks at morn and eve,
Not lonely, and what simple pleasures leave
No sorrow ; to your arts and crafts betake
You,—to your books and when you wish to make
A poem, read one. What ! you mope and yawn,
With how to live from midnight until dawn,
With how to live from dawn to sundown vex ;
Because when love is past there is no next :
Unless a second, ere the first is cool,
Torture you—twice a lover, twice a fool.

This novelists implicitly declare ;
And isn't such a chance enough to scare
Lover presumptive, and to make me thank
Heaven that my lot in love is drawn a blank ;
For sexual passion is not of the soul
But of the body palpitant and whole ;
“ Love ” is a matter of the senses ; who
Feels it for age and ugliness ;—do you ?
And did one love a female Tiny Tim,
He would not wed her, not if she would him,

At once so commonsensical and frantic,
More calculating even than romantic ;
Though some admire a pug dog's wrinkled nose,
A tailless cat with four too many toes,
A suitor seeks the normal, or the breed
Would take the downgrade at toboggan speed.
Judgment that jumps with mine I must commend,
But tell me why we cripples have no friend ;
I grant the most angelic women press
About us lest we feel our loneliness ;
Pity's their passion, which a fool above
The average may pronounce the dam of love ;
But love indeed we cripples leave to others ;
We have no friends who have no gods or mothers ;
I do not look for friendship ; I defy
Anyone born to care for such as I.

And do I care for anybody ? What
A question !—thanks ! you think me—do you not ?—
Cruel to you and cruel to my kin,
Because I prick your bubbles with my pin ;
Were you like me, you would not call me so,
You blink a fact, but I would rather know.
Indeed, I like you well enough, De Vyne,
To say, “ Why tug your cobbles *up* the Tyne ? ”
Why waste yourself on women who are bored
At times with being flattered and adored ?
Leave all these pleasure grounds and gay parterres
That do not need you and bestow your cares
There where the harvest gives a rich return
And fields are clear and rivals do not burn,—
On slighted age and fading youth untended,
On the spent struggler sinking unbefriended,

On children mutely asking for protection
And looking in our faces for affection ;
Adopt the waif abandoned ; when you roam
Let the stray beast follow your footsteps home ;
Why fling your cake to cat that will not eat ?
Why lay your heart at pampered Cissa's feet ?
Why should a gorged one suffer, when you carve,
Repletion while the faint and famished starve ?

Ah, there is Fido scratching at the door,
I thought I heard his patter on the floor ;
Pussy will go ; she hates him more than sin ;
The door that lets one out will let one in :
Thank you for opening ; Fido's not a cur,
He's Cissa's, but he loves me more than her,
Hence all this bounding, jumping, and gyrating ;
Dear doggie, *you* are not discriminating.
And there is Janet with the tea ; I hear
Narcissa in the hall. Yes, Fido dear,
Beg for your milk. Janet, you need not wait ;
But as you pass it put that picture straight.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAWN IN ENGLAND

FROM Dhu Lough in dreams and the dark Pass
away
To light-swept and cloud-shadowed mountain
Mulrea,

At last I behold, as I draw near the strand,
The long arm of sea flung for love round the land.

My boat bears to windows that gaze on Bengorm
—The green light in calm, the dark cloud in storm ;
The moon brings me back, what the day-star denies,
The soft Irish voices, the sweet Irish eyes.

The grey dawn announcing the day's cruel beams,
I cling long and fast to the fond heart of dreams ;
But light fades in light till the dear isle is flown,
I soon wake to strangers and sleep to my own.

OUR LADY'S DAY

Jesus saith . . . to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!"—*St. JOHN'S Evangel.*

TIME of the daffodils'
Sunshine in clusters,
Lulling the blast that chills
Wrestles and blusters,
Years from thy waning night
Mark their beginning;
Winter is losing might,
Summer is winning.

This is our Lady's Day;
Gladly we greet it,
Ave Maria say,
Softly repeat it,
Letting not Puritan
Fain to reprove us,
Jealous—as man for Man
Deified—move us.

Brother, if thou must blame,
Censure them rather
Who were the first to claim
God as our Father,

Christ as our Lord ; and we
What can we other,
Lady, than worship thee,
Mary, our Mother ?

Have we not all our life
Earnestly sought her,—
Woman—the sum of wife,
Sister, friend, daughter ?
Finding our soul's desire,
Yes, and excelling,
Pure as the heart of fire,
Tender past telling,

Constant in love, therein
Even fanatic ;
When for our fault or sin
Justice emphatic
Precedent seeks, to excuse
Mercy in season,
Lest we that grace abuse,
Love is her reason.

Heaven in thy blissful eyes
Never reclosing,
Mother-and-woman-wise
Queen interposing,
Lady beloved, in thine,
Motherhood tender,
Womanhood dear, divine
Homage we render.

OUR LADY'S DAY

Eyes that look down and rest,
Gently behold us ;
Mother, to mother-breast
Gather and fold us :
There in thine own repose
Lost are our terrors,
Gone and forgot our woes,
Cancelled our errors.

“IF I WERE A MAN”

Virum me natum vellem.—TERENCE.

Femina loquitur

HIS first mishap on the planet Earth
Was being born, said the sad Rousseau ;
But mine befell me before my birth
Long—but no matter how long—ago,
Had I been born a man, I would praise
And bless my Creator all my days.

I am able-bodied ; I can walk
And cycle in skirts my leagues a day ;
I can follow men discoursing, talk,
And write a letter as well as they ;
Equal them quite in a novel too,
At least I know three women that do.

From sheerest ill-luck I never meet
The man with whom I would barter brains,
But love to believe that my peer complete
Not only can, if he take the pains,
Outrow me, outrun, outeat, outdrink,
But no less outlove, outdream, outthink.

Let him be greater : I grudge him not
His calmer logic, his larger ken ;
I do but envy a man his lot
Of Heaven arranged or by men for men,
And think his will and his ruling star
Kinder to him than to me by far.

Men will master with their physique
Women with theirs ; in might against right
A man is strong and a woman weak ;
So shall she be while the nations fight,
Till spears are spades in millennial peace
And wars and rumours of war shall cease.

No wonder Eve in Biblical page
Delivered said, “ I have gotten a man
Child from the Lord ” ; no wonder the sage
Johnson rejoiced that he was not Ann ;
And who indeed with a virile life
But thanked the Lord he was not his wife.

Our Mother Eve was right, I declare,
And a woman ought to grieve to learn
She has borne a daughter, yet to bear
Her pangs of labour. But if in turn
Her husband the second infant bore,
A family would not number four.

The sex—and by that they mean the frail—
Is good for what ? Well, women may be
Wives, and so mothers of offspring male ;
But two of them friends are rare to see,
For women with wretched taste prefer
The smallest *him* to the greatest *her*.

If she mean to wed a girl must soon
Compass her aim. I wager my life
If a woman's single past her noon
That none has asked her to be his wife.
But a man in years may find a mate ;
And if I were he, marriage might wait.

If I were a man I would be free
 To know whatever a man may know,
 To see whatever a man may see
 And go wherever a man may go,
 Making my tracks in the grand repose
 Of desert sands or of Polar snows.

I would wander far and wander wide,
 Not a stock or stone that gathers moss ;
 Leaving the northern mariner's guide,
 Gazing at night on the Southern Cross,
 I would pace the deck and wake or sleep
 Between the stars and the pulsing deep.

Cities—for cities are men—and lands
 —For lands are races—would I behold,
 Would pitch my tent with Bedouin bands
 And camp on the veldt but not for gold ;
 Their harvest rich as an English weald
 Should forest, prairie and river yield.

My passion for heights I would appease,
 Alp and Andes and Himmaleh climb,
 Conquer the crests of the snowy seas
 And weep or laugh at the sight sublime ;
 If man shall top a peak in his pride,
 Seldom does woman stand at his side.

Wearied of change, I had ceased to roam,
 Sought, with the love that the wanderer knows,
 My native land, none other is home ;
 And found life's anticlimax at close,
 Neck of me fast in a business noose :
 Woman, I know not which I would choose.

Were my small estate not still intact
What should I do ? for I cannot teach ;
I shirk affairs and matters of fact ;
Figures I hate, bar figures of speech ;
Of what I abhor the most, finance,
I know that it only rhymes with romance.

The law I should loathe ; I lack the nerve
To nip off legs ; and thanks to Saint Paul
The Christian Church is a man's preserve :
If he came to life, the saint would fall
Foul of his own bad logic about
The sex and much else, I make no doubt.

Man, I had married without a fine,
With ease, for women adore their son,
And maidens the worst of men enshrine :
I have seen a woman, more than one,
Toady bipeds, because they were he's,
In mind and heart not up to her knees.

Scorning her sex, she would have denied
A woman Christ, nor been so devout
Were priests not men ; she cannot abide
A female M.D. How she would flout
The thought of a lady Don or Dean !
The wonder is that she brooked a Queen.

If I were a man, women would make
Much of me, listen to what I said,
Laugh at my puns ; and which I should take
Might puzzle my wits while I not wed
Twiddled my long moustache into curls
And, like a dealer, looked at the girls.

Had I chosen well ? With power of choice
 Blunders begin ; a girl may say “ No ” ;
 Hers is the ancient citizen’s voice ;
 Better be chosen than choose, I trow :
 I might—a man, purblind as a mole—
 Have married a face and risked a soul.

Fain had I won a sensible mate
 Instructed enough to understand
 My talk, not learned enough to hate
 The lot of a household drudge at hand ;
 Some brains are required to darn and dust,
 But more with brat and domestic rust.

She left to the life I would not lead,
 I should be off to the fair or mart
 To buy, to sell, to physic, to plead,
 Or haply to drive a coster’s cart,
 Better done my work and better paid
 Than woman’s is, whatever her trade.

A man, I should have to vote for “ knights ” ;
 What to a woman are male M.P.’s ?
 Citizen rates are my citizen rights,
 And the mob elect what men they please :
 Which party’s in I care not a groat,
 And sha’n’t and won’t till I get a vote.

Man, I should smoke my sweet cigarette
 Out of doors, nor fear the fire of eyes ;
 Dying of drought, I should dare to get
 The glass which the wayside tap supplies :
 I should not carry my yards of skirt,
 Or let them trail in the dust and dirt.

Custom is king and man is a slave.

With a hairy chin and a hairless pate,
Were I a man I should have to shave,
Enough to make me forswear his fate.
Each pleasing each, the sexes assume
Neither a beard nor Bloomer costume.

Man, I should think my dinner the chief
Event of the day; and were the lamb
A thought underdone, or were the beef
A shade too brown, I might "dash" or "damn"
It and the cook in language unkind,—
Shocking indeed from a woman refined.

Wife having spent her day within doors
Assaults her husband with questions, chat,
And talk about maids, by all that bores;
No man of mettle listens to that.
Tailors and clowns adjourn to their pub,
And I should end my night at my club.

Man, I might there "hot" stories rehearse
Unfit for feminine ears polite,
Drink too much for my stomach and purse;
And find on returning late at night
My wife, if not still darning the hose,
"Dreaming" in verse and "snoring" in prose.

Did her infant fret and pine in pain,
How many times might she not arise,
While I, doing naught against the grain,
Once in a way, but vexed with its cries,
Thought of my friends—O fortunate dogs!—
Bachelors still and sleeping like logs.

Such a selfish man I might have been ;
 And with his chances become far worse,
 Sunken in sense and a life unclean
 That ill befits my feminine verse
 And science at fault. Is it so hard
 To be from knowledge of vice debarred ?

Ah ! men do well, with powers of the strong,
 To guard their daughters at least from shame ;
 They pushed their right to the point of wrong :
 But I thank my fathers more than blame.
 A Balaam in rhymes I must confess
 I came to curse and remain to bless.

If character is the Maker's care
 And woman's be good, as men aver,
 So willing to yield the lion's share
 In heart, but never in head, to her,
 The Maker's purpose as yet is less
 In men than women crowned with success.

If I were a man, I should be free.
 Am I not free to be great and good ?
 Are the Muses male ? With liberty
 Have men not been as bad as they would ?
 An able man without her restraint,
 Good as a woman is thought a saint.

If I were a man I should be free
 To know whatever a man may know,
 To be whatever a man may be,
 And go wherever a man may go
 —To Hell perhaps ; and so let me praise
 The Lord, though a woman, all my days.

A MISOGYNIST

[An imaginary speech, with imaginary interruptions printed in italics.]

Longe præstat in arte
Et sollertius est multo genus omne virile.
LUCRETIVS.

“**L**ADIES and gentlemen,” the smug and suave
Speaker begins, but I propose to waive
Worse than unmeaning compliments ; and then
I do not speak to ladies but to men,
And to men only ; wherefore clear the court
Of women and of scribblers that report.

A boy, the most exempt from female sway,
Commands respect the while he makes his play
Business and learns his lessons by the way.
Little he suffers from his mother’s frown ;
He smiles as “ only girls ” his sisters down ;
Nor will he have them join his noble toil
In sports, which save as witnesses they spoil ;
And if they beat him at his books, he knows
That he could “ lick them hollow ” if he chose :
His love for them devoid of sexual charm
Will work him not a minimum of harm.
Mischief begins when he begins to put
His neck beneath a saucy beauty’s foot,

Yielding as man the right that is the male's ;
'Tis as a mistress that a woman fails ;
Then she behaves so badly, one agrees
With the Greek Joseph of Euripides,
Who put his finger on the social hurt
Wishing that, when she fashioned him from dirt,
Nature had hit upon a better plan
For the continuance of the species man.

But women are, and Nature all along
Was in the right and Man is in the wrong ;
She for obedience and dependence planned
The feebler, not for freedom and command ;
A woman, whether young or old, should stand
Where once in Eastern, Greek and Roman law
She stood, and now the savage sets the squaw,
Where still in civil right she stands or kneels
With minors, paupers, felons, imbeciles,
In due subordination, if not thrall ;
Unwedded, wedded, widowed, she shall call
Her father first and then her husband lord :
Her son will rule her of her own accord.

*Old-fashioned wretch, the women-rid reply,
You should have lived not Anno Domini
But in some Trojan or Homeric year,
When female flesh was cheap and iron dear ;
When a smart woman, chosen from a batch
Of women, being at a wrestling match
The consolation prize, was valued at
A tripod or—was it ?—a third of that,*

*Her fraction still. But Jesus Christ has raised
The social status of the sex appraised.*

—He has, no doubt, but not as you suppose.
Mention the woman of the Twelve he chose,
What gospel did she write and which of all
The best of all epistles? Did Saint Paul
Suffer her sex to preach or teach, or bear
Rule in the churches? Does the bride not swear
Obedience in the Book of Common Prayer?
Saint Paul and bachelors be whipt! you say,
No bridegroom swears that he will not obey;
Husband and wife will each in turn give way.
The sense of honour in her sex is rare,
And if a woman take no serious care
To keep an oath it is her own affair;
But never let her quote her saint and church
To leave them when it suits her in the lurch.

Yes, what I said before I still maintain,
That the male sex, which boasts the bigger brain,
That is, the larger heart, shall judge and reign.
This, you retort, is matter of dispute;
And what if we, not pausing to refute,
Affirm that woman has the better heart
And so the better brain? Well, on my part,
I praise man's better brain for all response;
The better heart I leave her for the nonce.

Creators in creations are displayed,
Our brain is measured in our works and weighed;
And those of men and women, one by one,
Might be compared, but what has woman done?

What fair and old religion did she found,
What just and legal institutes expound ?
What philosophic porch or grove renowned,
Or school of thought recalls a woman's name ?
In science what discovery of fame,
Method or system, can a lady claim,
Even in Botany, that suits her powers,
For all her love of field and garden flowers ?
Who dug up cities from their graves of yore,
Who wrested from the rocks their secret lore,
Who traced upon a chart the stellar course,
Who tamed the lightning's firmament force
Upon our menial messages to go
Under the seas and over ?—woman ? no !
Some paragon perhaps may comprehend
The learned treatise that a savant penned ;
May help her husband separate from blende
New elements, or follow him afar
In his high voyage bound from star to star ;
But not a girl that worked at school a few
Problems in lever, pulley, plane and screw,
Has, when adult, invented one machine,
Saving her sex, to sew, to wring, to clean.
A woman is not such a fool—are you ?—
As to do that which someone else will do.
Tush ! what she does in her own province can
Be done much better by a common man,
Whether she sews or stitches, boils or bakes.
In her spring cleaning what a mess she makes !
She polishes the brazen rods in view
And leaves a pint, a peck, of dust and flue
Below the canvas laid upon my stairs :
Such is a woman's wisdom in affairs.

In science and philosophy the lead
 Is man's ; and now to woman's art proceed :
 What " Iliad " hath she made, although she read ;
 What " Œdipus " ?—*She'll make hereafter.* When
 She does I clap applause and not till then.
 Into what marble hath she breathed the soul,
 The grief of Niobe's expressive stole ?—
 The joy majestic of Apollo's face
 Touched with amused compunction for the race ;
 What Parthenon divine, what manly dome,
 What womanly chapelle, of Athens, Rome
 Or Rouen hath she raised to God ?—*for brute*
Force is not hers, and ponderous labours suit
Ill that fair fane her body, which excels
All temples, all duomos, all chapelles
Of every clime and age ;—and must give place
 To man's so long as might is more than grace
 And power than prettiness. Ay, her physique
 For taking infinite pains is far too weak,
 And hence her work of genius still to seek.
 And yet her strength suffices for a line
 Straight, which she cannot draw. *Can man ?*

Design

Demands not elephantine or equine
 Energies ; but what nation's river flows
 By shrines of stone or marble which enclose
 The relics of pictorial art, that stays
 On parted lips the sacrilege of praise ?
 Of all these Virgins and her sacred Son
 Transfigured, crucified, ascending, one
 Remember which a woman's hand hath done ;
 Name her annunciation or her saint
 Throned and beatified. *She need not paint*

That is Madonna. Is she Christ? and so
What opera, what oratorio,
What modern drama bears a woman's name,
Which any man of mark would care to claim?
A lady can but render; and we find
That the creative faculty of the mind,—
The noblest is in man not woman kind.

So by the token women do not own
What here and there is found in men alone,—
The loftiest of the graces under heaven,
Summing the talents ten, the virtues seven,
Ay, magnanimity, we can but deem
Them morally less than men. *Oh, their supreme
Empery is the heart.* But tell me where
Fable embalms a single female pair
Of friends?—*in Ruth!* No woman loves a man
As he loves her and worships, while he can,
Until he knows her; and that love goes out
In lighting someone else's, who can doubt?
A bridegroom weds the bride; a bride, the
state
Of wedlock, for she reckons it her fate,
And knows not love till motherhood be won,
And then is all for cub or calf or son;
Maternal passion cannot be disproved,
And that is love of self but once removed.
*Oh, oh, you cry, a very fowl will brave
A kite, a fox, the roof of heaven to save
Her brood.*—She will. Besides, a hen is known
To peck a piping chick that's not her own.
Did I not grant her motherhood? why shout
Examples of it? *Woman is devout:*

—Because she goes to church ?—because she lacks
 Conviction, suffers terrors off the tracks,
 And is indeed far safer on the lines
 Laid down for her by worldlings and divines.
 The greatest man that treads or ever trod
 Our planet has or had the greatest god,
 Worshipping most ; less than a man, not more,
 A woman being smaller must adore.
 The Pope at best, the Bishop, or maybe
 The Vicar is her toy divinity.

*A woman on your showing, sir, is not
 More than a man Apollo's worth the shot ;
 Wherefore, have done. I have, for on the face
 Of it 'tis clear a woman has no case
 In court against a man. I leave a task
 Ungrateful and inglorious and ask
 Why with a mind less fitted for command
 Than ours a woman has the upper hand ;
 "Love" is the cause. While Cupid was a boy
 And took in bows and arrows urchin joy,
 Gods, men and women were his wanton game
 And in their flesh he lodged the shafts of
 flame ;*
 But when our adolescent Eros wed
 Psyche the soul, his naughty rule had fled
 Leaving a hardly purer one installed,—
 Appropriating and possessive, called
 By courtesy "Love"—that in its proper sense
 Is not desire but liking most intense.
 Well, now the monstrous wish of young mankind
 Is in the fairest of the fair to find
 A tender heart, sweet temper, docile mind

In body sane,—a maiden of his peers
In race, in country, fortune, rank and years,
A mistress and a wife in one combined
—Exclusive is inclusive love—inclined
To care for him ; since, underneath the rose,
What passion is no modest woman knows
Till she be maid no more. But one so sweet,
So fair, so gifted, shall a mortal meet ?
No ; but a man idealises,—decks
One in the spurious splendours of her sex,
That if she saw self, as her lover sees,
Transformed, transfigured, she would bow her knees
To what he deems herself. *The thought is fine,*
The picture exquisite, the dream divine ;
But is it she ? So crystals form and cling
In splendid prisms round a rotten string.

Thus placed upon a pedestal apart,
Woman in being wooed has won the start
Of servile suitor man. What slights, what flouts
He suffers at her hands ! and feels what doubts,
What jealousy—potential murder—lest
Some rival robber sprung upon him wrest
His jewel from his bosom. Oh, give up
A woman's love held like a champion cup
Against all comers. What ! *you can't ?*—you can ;
Con your Lavater and adopt my plan :
If you discover in your future bride
Feature or quality you can't abide,
Chuck her and risk her vile revenge. I knew
A female brazen-faced enough to sue
For damages in a breach of promise case ;
She got two thousand down, and, in the place

Of him she sued, a husband bad as bold,
Who lives with her on that ill-gotten gold.
Well, to resume my plan and risk the law,
Where is the loveliest face one ever saw
The greatest mind without defect or flaw ?
Look for the flaw if you would not succumb
To female fascinations ; take your drum,
Doll or kaleidoscope to pieces ; find
The grave defect of face, and thus of mind :
Dwell upon this till you become aware
Of nothing but the fault in mind though rare,
In heart though warm, in face however fair.
But this is devilish,—to dwell on blots ;
And you must see the sun to see the spots.
Nay, do but wait and you will love a score
Of women and unlove them all and more,
One at a time, of course ; whereas, you dunce,
You might have liked a hundred all at once,
For ever. Like ; you cannot like too much,
Too many, women even. True as touch
Liking is constant, mutual, well-behaved ;
Not exigent, enslaving and enslaved.
But sight not, far less coast, that isle of fire
Which some call “ love ” and others call “ desire ” ;
Keep your imagination cool ; abjure
Erotic novel-mongers—all impure ;
All Pandars ; and all liars, were their old
Couples not drawn indifferent and cold.
And be you doomed to marriage, rather shun
Than seek your doom with fools that love for
fun ;
Thus a child frolics with the wily sea,
Racing before the coming tide in glee,

Little foreboding that the dimpling wave
Will swell above him and become his grave.

You say: though I were right and you were
wrong,

One cannot pitch out Nature with a prong.

Yes, you'll sequester to your single use
The woman whom you fancy, to produce
Slaves for the sex's whimsical demands ;
You'll take a daughter off her father's hands,
And he will give a dowry with his pearl,
In riddance of a problematic girl :
But ere the trial trip is past, you wake
One morning and discover your mistake ;
In her that seemed a smart and likely maid
You get a sickly sheep, or vicious jade,
Or wanton goat or who knows what beside ?
Therefore, before you hazard such a bride,
Remember that the marriage cure will last
When love, the monomania, might have passed
Without a desperate remedy applied.
Therefore, before the fatal knot is tied
Run through the names that History records,—
Or legend, of the wives that loved their lords :—
Frail Eve seduces Adam, Adam eats
The fruit forbidden ; sly Rebekah cheats
Her Isaac old and blind ; Zuleika's name,
Potiphar's wife, with Phædra's is by Fame
Burnt into mind ; Delilah, Jael-like,
False to her people's foeman, strokes to strike ;
The trinket-loving Eriphyle blabs
The fatal secret of her spouse and grabs
The bribe of baubles ; Clytemnestra stabs

Hers netted in her tank ; with reprimand
 Michal meets homeward in a happy land
 The Lord's anointed king, for, if he tries,
 One can please God but not a woman ; wise
 Not even for another, primed of Hell,
 The painted fraud, bedizened Jezebel
 Drags Ahab down to doom ; Xantippe scolds
 The wisest of mankind ; Herodias holds
 Rash Herod to his promise ; skilled in guile
 The pearl-dissolving sovereign of the Nile,
 That bred her as it breeds the crocodile,
 In sensual solvent steeps and melts in time
 Roman virility, but yields in crime
 To prostitute imperial, Messaline ;
 Lady Macbeth persuades to murder ; Queen
 Eleanor traps her rival in the green
 Haunt-hiding forest ; Henrietta curst
 Manipulates her consort, Charles the First,
 Then from her France of safety hears a thing
 That frees her for a second spousal ring,
 A lackey the successor of a king.

What of Alcestis and Andromache

And Edward's Eleanor ?—a royal three,

Of royal blood to boot. Good wives we take

For granted, and the rarer wicked wake

Our wonder and are famous : these will roam ;

The virtuous are not heard of far from home.

All wives are bad because the good are bores,

Wherefore men pass their evenings out of doors ;

Selfish they may be, but it is a proof

They are not happy under their own roof,

That lifted would reveal domestic woes

Which men in honour bound do not disclose ;

The faithful suffer most. Out of a score
Of aged couples in a poorhouse, four
Elect to live together. Who would house
With such a wilful wife as Lydgate's spouse ?
His means in dress and furniture she drains,
And thrives like basil on his buried brains.
And women most affectionate relax
The sinew, sap the strength and fuse like wax
The wills of men. 'Tis better to be free
Than happy. If a Benedict there be
That promised fair, his young ideals droop,
His dreams decay, his port begins to stoop,
He slouches in his gait, he stands at ease,
He loses height, he dwindles, by degrees
Adapted, till—his wife no taller grown—
His eyes are on a level with her own.
Why should the woman not be greatedened ? Peace !
'Tis easier to diminish than increase.

In fine, the lover's peer in ladies is
Lesser, and lacking in his qualities ;
A man has hers, a woman has not his.
Behold her sense of justice only strong
Enough to blame a course when things go wrong ;
Even her judgment passionate and veined
With prejudice, her intuition strained ;
Her courage *nil*,—I saw her only now
Flee panic-struck before a harmless cow :
With what composure sitting at the helm
Would she direct in calm and storm a realm ?
Her, therefore, with her passion for details
So fatuous and engrossing that she fails
To see the whole, with her short-sighted views

In business, still as heretofore refuse
The suffrage, which a clown can better use ;
From magisterial bar, from deep debate
On matters all momentous to the State,
From civic strife, municipal fracas
And late Saint Stephen hours, oh, keep Mamma !
How would the Bishops' Bench, the Speaker's chair
And how the Lord High Chancellor's woolsack fare,
If filled by Petticoats ? For Nature when
She hammers thin does not begin again,
But turns to women those that fail as men.

*Man, you have gone too far ; we like the maid
And matron all the more for your tirade
Against the sex. How little life were worth
The living were it swept from off the earth !
And though you prove your point that woman stands
Far behind man in head and heart and hands,
We cannot prove—more than the surgeon's knife
Or scalpel can locate the seat of life—
Her potent magic charm, her force occult
Magnetic, but divined from its result.
A woman is a power, or fair, or plain,
Or young, or old, so she be sweet and sane.
More could we say, but now we must be gone ;
The Borough Banquet will come off anon,
And you'll attend, of course. But when the toast
" The Ladies " shall be given by our host,
What, when they fill the glasses, will you do ?
Oh, I shall drink in irony with you.*

ALL FOOLS' MORNING

Tu n'es que dorure.—V. HUGO's *Hernani*.

Stultus loquitur

O MY first love, my Helen unwed,
With wondrous beauty God trusted
you,

And you have betrayed His trust, and led
With your looks of love, that are not true,
Men to destruction, and they are dead.

O my last love, it is well that He
Trusted not with a beautiful face
You that have wit to seem and not be
A beautiful soul, a moral Grace,
To which the reprobate bows the knee.

You goddess armed from the brain that bred,
You graven image sitting in state
Where the Lord our God should sit, I read
Whatever in me was good and great
Into all you did and all you said.

I must admit, now my wrath is cooled,
How well you posed for my fancy sketch,
To play your part so skilfully schooled ;
And what remains but to own, you wretch,
Myself by you deliciously fooled.

And yet the sinner that heeds the call
Of priest commissioned to say "Return!"
And makes for the height is like to fall
Deeper in hell if later he learn
The priest himself no saint after all.

I that believed in virtue deplore
My lost estate of credulous bliss,
The crest of the wave it is to adore
And this the trough of the billow,—this,—
To trust no woman for evermore.

A RECURRENT DREAM

Un songe
Entretient dans mon cœur un chagrin qui le ronge ;
Je l'évite partout—partout il me poursuit.—RACINE.

Amator loquitur

GOD is against me, then,
It is part of the Maker's plan
That whatever is done in the light
Shall all come back in the night,—
All in the brain of a man
No worse than his fellow-men.

I farm out here with my brother ;
And we think, though our lodging and fare
And labour are hard and rough,
That “ Thank you, God, for enough ”
Is more pious by far than a prayer
Always asking for something or other.

We speak very seldom and yet
Are excellent friends in the main,
And amused without moments of leisure
For sentiment—pah !—or for pleasure,
The worst of all possible pain
To him that is sworn to forget.

My days on the farm have sped
Well enough on the whole, and as soon
As I fling myself down I sleep
The sleep of the settler, far too deep
For a dream more than once in a moon,—
For a dream which is all that I dread.

And then for no manner of reason,
The dream is on me again ;
I could swear I was wide awake
Would she but once in mistake
Kiss me not asking, as when
We were lovers betrothed for a season ;

As when at twilight we stood
In the summer long ago,
Hands of us, lips of us, heart,
Spirit, nothing apart,—
Body or soul ; and oh,
How a nightingale sang in the wood !

Which of our pulses,—mine
Was it, hers was it, beat
In a single turbulent tide ?
When I thought that not death could divide
Myself from the self that was sweet
And lovely and loved and divine.

Then I offended her ; death
Of distrust and doubt of hell
Filled me, and I let fall
Words I had died to recall ;
In jealousy wrathful and fell
Who knoweth the thing that he saith ?

She had loved someone else in the past ;
She had wandered with him in our hurst,
While a moon was filling with bliss ;
For my luck with a woman is this,
Never to be the first
She has loved, and never the last ;

For her sense of honour is keen
As a man's, and before she would hear
My confession of love she had told
Her own for another of old ;
And thereafter the light was drear
With the shadow of what had been.

When I came to myself on the day
Of our quarrel, I prayed and implored
Grace for the wrong I had done her ;
But I never truly rewon her ;
She never forgave or restored
Except in a half-hearted way.

The love in her eyes at our meeting,
My guerdon at goal of the miles
To be trodden for that, was withheld ;
The spring of her soul which had welled
Over her face into smiles,
Like a fountain, failed me at greeting.

She was never the same thereafter ;
The joy had gone out of our troth ;
Our marriage, the subject of yore
So charming, was mentioned no more ;
And our talk was a burden to both,
Unlightened by love that is laughter.

She was one of those women, I thought,
For whom the defect in a friend
And the flaw in a lover disturb
Relations, that must be superb
And magnificent, world without end,
Or paltry, contemptible, naught.

Though my nature is not of the dove
Or the lamb, I made myself meek ;
And she liked me when timid and tame
No more for not being the same
As the brave who not seeming to seek
Had won, without truckling, her love.

Then I did as novelists tell us
Their heroes have done, I flirted,
Without making the slightest effect
On myself or on her, who recked
Not a jot, too proud, she asserted,
To feel or to show herself jealous.

Not till a man shall succeed
In making her jealous will he
Be sure of the love of a girl ;
And though jealousy isn't a pearl
I can't help wishing that she
Had worn it in moment of need.

I loved only her, who surpassed
Every other. And that is the worst
Of loving a woman like this,—
You may try, but you can't even kiss
Another than her. The first,
If you love her, is also the last.

My spirit was up and God wot
The forty-horse efforts I made ;
But the wrong of a word in haste
Was never by kindness effaced
So far that her lips were betrayed
Into kiss that forgave and forgot.

“ Love is absolute trust ”
Was her motto ; and mine was “ Love
Is perfect forgiveness ” : which showed
That neither for other had glowed
Sincerely, though weeping above
An urn with its handful of dust.

We suffered our torture for seven
Sennights of penal fire ;
And it seemed in all worlds, in all lives,
—Alas for the devil who strives !—
That my passing distrust and her ire
Eternal, would cost us Heaven.

At last I could bear it no longer—
Some halves are bigger than wholes—
I offended again, and she broke
The neck of it all with a stroke.
Strong is the sea that rolls
Between us, but love is stronger.

I do very well in the day,
I fare very well for a term,
I turn off my love, as I quaff
My flagon of brew, with a laugh
And a shrug ; my defences are firm,
And I keep recollection at bay.

But then in the moment when you
Can't hinder yourself for a crown,
I dream of her hard all the night ;
And when I get up with the light,
My line of defence is all down
And every square inch of me blue.

Since talking of self is confessing,
I confess to myself in my verse,
That after a dream, not to think,
I smoke in excess and I drink ;
For a man is a beast, and a curse
Is the woman that is not a blessing.

It is women make drunkards, and not
Distillers and pothouses handy ;
It's not my proper restraint
Of myself, it's my stomach's the saint
Abhorrent of whiskey and brandy,
If I'm not a tippler or sot.

In the Pass of Love we must plod
To marriage its end to get out
Of the passion and gloom for good ;
The arrested stands where it stood :
And my love for this woman, no doubt,
Is my doom till I'm under the sod.

The thought of Death is a gleam
Of triumph and freedom for men,
But I dare not harbour it lest
From Fate refusing I wrest
The boon she withholds ; and then
Who knows that the dead do not dream.

THE ADOXA

Let no flower of the Spring pass thee by.

The Wisdom of Solomon.

IN the season lush with buttercup and clover,
Yellow with the corn or ruddy with the poppy,
Maybe one had missed thee, little flower, Adoxa.

Now the ferns are furled and curled like infant fingers,
Now the fist or fan of leaves is clenched or folded,
Trembling on the Springtide like a soul on loving ;

Now the flowers are few and every one is precious,
Sweet as gold to digger, fair as pearl to diver,
All by heart I have thee, Flower and Leaf Adoxa.

Thine and none but thine is this the true, the tender
Green that flames to golden in the crowning floweret,
Green that pales to opal in the stalk translucent.

Forcing not thy presence, first betrayed by fragrance,
Meek one in the wake of tempests come to meet me,
How shall I return thy greeting long neglected ?

I'll not say I love thee better than the Daisy ;
Who of those he loveth saith that one is fairer,
Dearer than the other, never yet loved any.

What is perfect past compare is ; wherefore, never,
Never in one sunset do we miss another :
Everything is lovely, nor can be more lovely.

And I love thee,—and the more, my Flower Adoxa,
Knowing thou art done devoutly into woman,
Nature feeling through thee comes to my Beloved.

Long she lived and loved unrecognised, unheeded,
Showed no sorrow, made no plaint and wooed no pity ;
Only went on loving, went on being lovely.

He that hath her was the first to have and hold her,
Rich is he with treasure, no one else the poorer ;
Glad without misgiving, no one else the sadder.

He is clear of passions that disturb the vision,
Free from squat suspicion, strange to jealous anguish,
In whose deathful coils the tender Love must perish,

Resting in affection, satisfied with beauty,
To himself of happy lovers the most happy,
Loving most profoundly what he trusts supremely.

For the flower is fair as if it were not fragrant,
For the light is warm as if it were not splendid,
For his love is good as if she were not lovely.

Virtue passing from her into him she loveth
Perfects and refines his strong and sovereign manhood ;
Womanly and manly is the fully human.

In the gracious season graduating glories,
Having made Home heavenly, she shall make Heaven
 homely,
First to greet him when he shall have done with winter.

A SILENT WOMAN

*Altra risposta . . . non ti rendo
Se non lo far.—DANTE.*

I STEAL from guests and children in the gloom
Of gloaming and unnoticed reach my room ;
No waste, no wild, no desert can receive
A pilgrim, lonelier than the one I leave :
No continent of ice, no fiery coast,
No chamber left to body lorn of ghost,
Appals us with a silence more profound
Than that of exiles from the world of sound.

I see the branches swinging in the breeze ;
The shadows moving fast beneath the trees ;
The rolling billows of the seas of grain ;
The swift and furious lances of the rain ;
The flash of fierce encounter when the god
Of heaven's artillery is lightning-shod ;
The flood of waters shivered in its fall
To dewy dust, with rainbows arching all ;
The torrent pulsing from the mountain, faint
—Rushing and rolling and rollicking—for the main ;
The sea that never is the same and yet
Never leaves room in gazer for regret,
Whether it foam to heaven against the blast
Or image to the coast the white-winged mast,
A gem of facets infinite at noon,
And now one opal underneath the moon.

The songster in his freedom of the skies
Exulting, I behold with straining eyes,
Until his song ascending disappears,
For music meets mine eyes but not mine ears.
I watch my children at their games and see
The glance significant, the gesture free,
But hear not boyish shout from boldest tongue,
Nor girlish laugh—the sweetest carol sung ;
I feel the strong of heart in hands that hold,
And read the tender tale in eyes retold,
But never sounds of homing steps rejoice
Me that have never heard my husband's voice
Or known what more than music in our ear
Our name is on the lips that own us dear.

Once I could hear the far-off belfry chimes,
The sing-song of the bees that haunt the limes,
The twitterings that distinguish eve from morn,
The roar of flame, the ripening of the corn,
The lullabies of waves that lip the sands,
The resonant strings unswept by mortal hands,
The sounds like falling streams to him who roves
At breathless noon in Sarum's sacred groves.
I was more ear than eye ; the world of sight
Did even less than that of sound delight ;
And rendered into notes of music best
Were colour, motion, love and prayer exprest :
But now the minster organ's solemn swell,
The roaring ocean audible in a shell,
The harping wind is hushed as insect's hum ;
The thunder of Niagara is dumb.

When I remember sadly that for me
—Who knew a bird from bird, a tree from tree,

By listening to their sounds, themselves unseen
Making their music in the grove and dene—
That hearing fine and trained, in which I joyed,
The first of all my senses is destroyed,
I feel disposed to murmur at a fate
Which hopeless passion cannot overrate,
But some consoler says : “ Accept a cross ;
Forget not loss is gain, and gain is loss.
And who knows if our pleasures from the sense
Of hearing or our pains are more intense
In this our Babel, where the air is filled
With ‘ music ’ hummed and strummed and milled and
killed ;

Where it is lawful to attack the keys
And strings and stops and murder as we please ;
Where human cries from gentle beast in dole,
Pursued by fierce and strong afflict the soul,
Yes, and the flesh at fellow-creature’s throe
Quivers like theirs beneath the brutal blow ;
Where those we love the most with weapon picked
From armouries of words can best inflict,
With surest aim at vulnerable part,
Stabs that reverberate in the fleshly heart.
Happy the deaf, that are beyond the reach
Of bitter and irrevocable speech,—
Beyond the reach of voices raised in rage,
That make you wish, as those in Dante’s page
Stunned with the din of that three-throated dog,
To be as deaf and senseless as a log.
Addressed in every accent lip can frame
You learn at last to loathe your very name ;
And, sick of door that bangs and tone that jars,
Betake you to the silence of the stars.”

Perhaps my losses counterpoise my gains,
For with my pleasures have I lost my pains.

Once I could speak. My spirit found relief,
And more,—escape, for passion, joy and grief :
Quizzical, quick at repartee, I broke
A lance with all in careless talk and joke ;
And knew not, recked not, who or what was hit,
So I displayed my knowledge or my wit.
For candour—cruel candour—was my boast ;
Albeit, venting what is uppermost
At moment, which they may to-morrow rue
And then disown, the candid are not true.
But when I woke from that long illness, fled
Was language, and the sense of hearing dead ;
And from that hour till this my days are spent
In voiceless silence, but not discontent
Because debarred from commerce with my kind
But rather thankfulness because not blind.
Still have I vision, still the world of books,
Letters and all the eloquence of looks,
That universal language, which I read
And speak far better than another need,
With that dumb speech, which less at fingers' end
Than word at tongue's allows me time to mend,
For who that breathes a moment to revise
Would utter what is cruel or unwise ?
My children sometimes anger one another,
But never are they angry with their mother,
Who dumb and dear as the domestic beast
Evoking only tenderness, has ceased,
Unruly member hushed, to give offence,
Her sorry virtue being impotence,

Who does not long, perhaps, so much for use
Of language as regret its old abuse.

Once—for it is not vanity to own
To beauty, grace or talent that is flown—
Once I could sing and disengage the heart
Of hearers from their individual smart,
Liberate love, and give devotion pinions
To soar above the throng and clear the minions
Of time and space—the moon and stars—to Him
Who makes the blinding orb of daylight dim,
At sound and vision of whose voice and face
The heavens have fled away and found no place.
What! can one sing that listeners shall admire
The voice that is the sweetest of the quire?
Too little claim they for their art divine
Who find their poor reward in eyes that shine
And hearts that beat applause; who seeks repute,
Renown or wealth from art were better mute,
As he shall be when years, that filch the flower
Of beauty, shall deprive the songster's power.
Ah, tell me which of mortal woes is peer
To that which waits upon a closed career,
Our race unrun? Is it more hard to part
From life than from our own beloved art?
Is love in vain more sad?—it may be so;
I would not speak of what I do not know,

Indeed I have not known love unreturned,
For never feeling in my bosom burned
To the white heat of passion till I knew
My Roland,—him who came to me in lieu
Of art, of my lost art, a bubble burst,
Bringing his best at moment of my worst.

But think not that my being thus undone
Made me the sooner, not the later, won ;
For when I knew his heart I held aloof,
I would not understand him, I was proof
Against his pleading eyes, and would not raise
My own to his lest they should meet his gaze ;
I—yes, *I*—made him jealous, for he thought
That all must seek the woman whom he
sought,—

The woman whom he did not, could not, win
While love was kept her secret like a sin ;
But from that hour he pressed me to declare
Indifference, to which I durst not swear,
My “no” was idle, for in this debate
The stronger, not the weaker, chooses mate.
And now, although I seemed a wife unmeet,
Our married happiness is so complete,
My very disabilities so long
Have checked in him the vices of the strong,
And left him but their virtues—courage, ruth,
Chivalry, wisdom, tenderness and truth,
That what might seem to some a grave mistake
I can’t regret, not even for his sake.
And when I long to speak the loving word
Or hear it as another would have heard,
I do the loving deed ; and none is worse
For what I, therefore, cannot call a curse,
Or if a curse one common to my kind,
All in their measure deaf and dumb and blind ;
Not only may whole worlds about us lie
Not to be heard of ear and seen of eye,
But also our few senses are infirm,
And ever are they coming to their term

As islander to seas ; this all that men
Behold is naught to what escapes our ken
Of worlds about us and beyond : who hears
The sound of light, the music of the spheres,
The turmoil of the ants at work that glows ?
Even the poet cannot voice his woes ;
And what can happiest pair when words are weak
But hold each other's hands and cease to speak ?

Enough ! for Roland must be on his way ;
The moment comes for which I live the day ;
He shall not at his first arrival miss
In absence of a word a tenderer kiss,
Nor will I fail his eyes that wander till
They light upon her face whose voice is still ;
His house were not his home, nor were his life
Precious, without his deaf and silent wife.

THE MASS OF THE GOOD THIEF

I am grand as thou,
Seeing I comprehend thee.—BROWNING.

WHEN gone is the power
To beseech, and the hour
Of the Humbler is nigh,
Cover my face,
Steal from the place,
Leave me to die.

But to the cold
Eyes come to behold
The forfeit of crime,
Christ on the Cross
Suffered no loss,
He was sublime.

With a wreath of thorns
Is He crowned and in Scorn's
Eye lifted abhorred,
When the common consent
Of the rabble is rent
With a lonely "Lord."

No longer he hears
The jibes and jeers
Of a field full of foes ;
Glad his ear listens,
Pleased his eye glistens,
Once ere it close.

Oh, high and imperious,
 Passing mysterious,
 Like to their pains,
 Are the joys of high souls ;
 Off who consoles,
 Off who profanes !

This joy to impart
 To the desolate heart
 In the midst of its grief,
 On thee did it fall,—
 Thee whom we call
 The Penitent Thief.

Oh, high was thy worth
 And gentle thy birth,
 That didst in the hour
 Of man's degradation
 And mortal prostration
 Appeal to his power,

With suppliant breath
 Touching in death
 The sceptre immortal
 Of one to be King
 When Hades should ring
 As he entered the portal.

And he on the rood
 Saluted the good
 As greatness can ;
 And does man the more
 The Maker adore
 Or the Maker man ?

And as with the grace
Supreme of race
The crucified thief
Spake not of weakness,
So Christ in His meekness
Spake not of grief,—

Spake but of bliss ;
And the splendour of this,
Which streamed from His brow,
Is one line of light
Through the long night
Of the ages till now ;—

When dieth the daring
Offender despairing,
Crying “ Too late ! ”
For he hears past a doubt
The knocking without,—
Death at the gate.

Then in his dole
He remembers the soul
As belated as he.
“ Pardon, O son,
By repentance is won ;
There is pardon for thee.”

So the Church says
Through her priest that prays
For the ghostly repose
Of the dying who listens
With eye that glistens
Once ere it close.

Hope will we cherish
Though precedent perish ;
And it passes belief
That one so sublime
Ever wallowed in crime.
Wert thou a thief ?

—Then Art was too long for thee,
Fate was too strong for thee,
Of hindrances duty full,
And when the call sounded,
On thy soul bounded,
On to the Beautiful.

The Light of Creation
In death's desolation
Thou couldst perceive ;
When Heaven's own Elected
Of Earth was rejected,
Thou couldst believe ;

Or ever the Sun
For the outrage done
Him not to be borne,
Darkness had dashed
In the faces that flashed
Ignorant scorn.

We that incline
To reject the divine
One banning as treason
Our habits, our measures
For self, and the pleasures
Of sin for a season ;—

We that have seen
 Where the crown should have been
 No nimbus of light :—
 We had not throned,
 We had not owned,
 Sceptreless right.

Now that to name Him
 Lord and acclaim Him
 Scarce more meritorious
 Than to disown Him,
 Now men enthrone Him
 God the most glorious.

For the last, the one
 Office we had not done
 Him, done Him by thee,
 Praises remain on thee,
 Blessings we rain on thee,
 Debtors are we.

Graceful as knight
 Of chivalry bright
 To greatness undone,
 Step with attended ones,
 One of Earth's splendid ones,
 Noblest but One.

With thy lot so cast,
 So strangely, at last,
 With Him, in story
 Thou shalt descend,
 World without end,
 Sharing His glory.

AN EASTER HYMN

I will not imitate things glorious,
No more than base ; I'll be mine own example.

WEBSTER.

WHEN I was young I thought to mould
Myself on model fine
Of hero, sage or saint of old,
And make myself divine ;
From living man approved I stole
His gesture, look and tone,
I forged his hand, I forged his soul,
Not yet myself alone.

But when I, with a task ill-starred,
Ended where I began,
Because I lapsed when off my guard
To this my natural man,
I heard the counsel : " Star from star,
And flower from flower is known ;
You cannot be what others are,
Then be yourself alone."

And since that hour it seems to me
The inalienable right
Of him that fronts the heavens to be
Himself with all his might ;

I care not for your bronzes cast
From masterpiece of stone :
I dare to be myself at last,
And be myself alone.

File not away with foolish frown
Flaws in the marble face ;
Nor chip, nor cut the statue down
To fit a vacant space
In narrow hearts : I might be what
The saint would fondly own,
But had I loved you, friends, if not
Myself, myself alone.

My faults are not myself : the greed
Of gain and traffic vile
Is not the Israelite indeed,
In whom there is no guile,
No base alloy which gold refined
In furnace shall disown ;
The virgin metal left behind
Is gold and gold alone.

O lovely Freedom, what art thou
But freedom to fulfil
The self that tyrants disallow ?
What boots our strength and skill
In arts refused ? what profits it
If, Nature crossed and thrown,
We play the part in life unfit
For self, the self alone ?

The stripling prays us not for bread
And raiment more than room
Such as we leave a plant to spread
Its root and branch and bloom ;
And what we claim ourselves we give
To those that sweat and groan :
He that is most himself shall live
Least to himself alone.

Millions alike and none the same
In voice or face or hand
Or soul, albeit of one name
And bred in kindred band,—
I love you thus, my brother men,
In this or other zone ;
And God were you to make again
Would make you thus alone.

Since the great Master makes us such,
By means mechanic none,
As with His finger, some with touch
Caressing, one by one,
Shall we not when this body dies,
Or the last trump is blown,
Each from his flesh or grave arise,
Himself, himself alone ?

THE SKETCHING CAMPAIGN

Quod petis, hic est.—HORACE.

YES, since we love each other we can part ;
And love were always happy could it be
One with such sweet security of heart,
One with such absolute trust as mine in thee.

In vain at thine approach the wild fowl flew
To find a surer haven for their fears ;
In vain the startled hare to shun thy view
Sat motionless and drooped her trembling ears.

Oh, not for thee shall stem be spoiled of crown,
Nor flower deprived to gladden alien gloom,
Nor shall the fluted stalk suffused with down
And flushed with rose, be robbed of marvellous bloom.

Unthinned of lust that not from thee shall rend
The sacred secret of their fast retreat,
The stately spires in bells of flame ascend,
Chimed but of bees, in charmèd circle sweet.

Not to disturb the order of the grove,
Not to dislodge the silence of the shade,
As one on sufferance wilt thou meekly rove,
The guest and not the tyrant of the glade.

Thou wilt not, passing out of noonday, draw
The veil of leaves aside with rapture rude
Before thou pierce with steps of pilgrim awe
The depths of hushed and hallowed solitude.

Thy presence is as light as summer dreams,
As inoppressive as the sylvan powers
Shed in their shadows, or the secret streams
Confessed in greener grass and leagues of flowers.

Wilt breaking rugged flints on weary ways
For kindly speech of thine shall halt awhile,
Age after thee with shaded eyes shall gaze,
And youth unresting linger for a smile.

Oh, fortunate, to hide so dear a head,
Of haunts, with moss illumined, lichen'd, lone ;
Oh, happy trees to be interpreted
By soul and touch as gentle as their own !

For thou wilt paint their ruddy branches fired
With day's departing glows ; or, far from men,
The rowan flushed with fruit, the birk inspired,—
The spirit in possession of the glen,

And those expectant that await the ray
Coming of Morn which shall submerge the Night,
And drown the stars with upward welling Day,
And flood the sea with influent waves of light.

I am as fixed as they, but did I roam
From this beloved land that gave thee birth,
The wings of doves should only bear me home
Nearer the heart of this, the heart of Earth.

She where she cherished hath endowed her child
With varied season that too swiftly flies,
The flowers' procession in the waste and wild,
The shifting shadows and the changing skies.

What would I paint?—what not? where'er I pass,
Nay where I stand is mine elective won:—
The gleaming stalk and dazzling flower of grass
That gushes forth transfigured in the sun;

Yonder exuberant beech, which upward grows
And outward to the light, that dims and shames
The passing whiteness of the bolted snows
And pales the beacon's inflorescent flames;

Our native haunts, not known of us too well;
The oneness of our forest trees, so wed,
So grown and intergrown, we cannot tell
The leaves of each from other's overhead,

Or underfoot, when yonder green is gold
Burnt as in fire, and beeches shed their beam
Of leaves—now twice in tender shadow told,
And thrice in image of enchanted stream.

Thus ever should our beings blend like these,
Upwards and outwards yearning, though in pain
And passion, throbbing to the selfsame breeze,
Lulled by the same delicious sound of rain.

Painter and poet are not alien; no,
Not other are their loves and arts benign;
Bent of all hues is heaven's transcendent bow,
And all the Muses make the Muse divine.

Yet think not for myself I plead or grieve
As absence could divide or death dethrone ;
Go where thou wilt, for me thou canst not leave,
And come what may, I shall not be alone.

A MODERN JUDAS

What it is a crime to do, it is a crime to think.

The Rambler, 8.

YES, it is I myself. At last I shake
Off sleep that tires and ages, and awake.
Yet it is night, and this is . . . not my bed,
Nor this my pillow,—this that props my head ;
My room is space ; my roof, the hollow skies ;
My furniture, the staring slabs that rise
In ghostly congregation standing round
What but a church ? It is a burial ground ;
And in the waning moon four letters shine
Above me, L-u-c-y ; oh, the name is thine,
It is thy grave I couch on in the night,
Wife of my youth, aforetime my delight.

What do I here ? why have I come and whence ?
A link is lacking in the chain of sense.
Perhaps I dream I live. Nay, for I heard
In her own room Octavia's final word :
" Go ;—you are gone ; we never met," she said ;
" The man that I believed you once is dead,
Never to rise again ;—if one may call
Him dead that never did exist at all."
Then I went out into the night undone,
Refuge in man or woman had I none
Nor house nor heart of sanctuary, save,
Thou that didst love me long and well, thy grave.

And hither from excess of feeling numb,
Not knowing that I came, I must have come
And, in a stupor fallen, lost a fleet
While this identity, that, once so sweet,
Is bitter now. If Nothingness can score
Us out a moment, why not evermore?
Would I were dust to dust and mould to mould,
Not thus alive, to shame and grief untold !

Yet Death, dear Death, may not be far away,
For on the minds of drowning men, they say,
Flashes in every scene and act their past
Life, that must close in tragedy at last ;
Thus, thus, my whole career, in light and shade,
Even in three dimensions is displayed.
Here is the house where I was born ; I race
Through all the rooms. I see my father's face,
My mother's eyes of love, my sister's looks,
My top and hoop, my picture-cards and books,
The garden walks, the pond on which I float
That thing of life with sails inspired, my boat ;
The fields in which I play, but most the field
Ascending to the ridge above the Weald ;
I clamber up it to roll down again,
Forecasting in my games the lot of men.
And with me play my boyish sister Kate,
My elder but my chum, and her sedate
Friend, Lucy Shirley, who is drest in blue
Matching her eyes, so timid but so true ;
These playing second fiddle to me treat
My pigmy prowess like a monstrous feat,
Laugh at my talk,—I have a clumsy wit,
And boylike I am fond of lording it.

These form my necessary audience, sage
Enough to cheer me strutting on the stage.

I see the road on which I walk to school,
A village one and "mixed," where—not a fool,
Nor yet a dunce—I learn not, save in class,
My lessons, hoping with my parts to pass
Muster with mistress, whom I disobey,
Though loving only less than I love play :
Wherefore my conscience suffers, for the wild
And playful boy is called a wicked child ;
Wherefore I shake my bed and room in fright,
When lightnings flash and thunders roll at night,
Lest I be stricken dead and doomed to dwell
With demons in the fiery heart of hell,
Pictured in *Pilgrim's Progress* and defined,
Wherewith to prepossess the youthful mind,
By Bunyan-reading Pastor Littlehope,
Whose forehead shines with sanctity and soap,
Who bangs his Bible in his zeal of heart,
To make "the sinners in the gallery" start.
But pure in life, albeit crude in creed,
He is, what I am not, a saint indeed ;
Much better than his God, he turns aside
When coming from his flock at eventide,
Not to set foot upon a panting toad
Or crush an errant snail across the road.

I see the village carried east and west
Along the ridge and straggling up the crest ;
Its denizens above the level scorn
The folk below the hill as baser born.

At one extreme the church commands the weald ;
The castle at the other, half concealed
With ivy, bold and picturesque as though
Designed and built for ruin long ago.
And at a distance from them both, between
The Church and Keep, the Grammar School is seen,
Ruled by a governor that with his rod
Punishes in a passion like his god.
Indeed he teaches us " divinity,"
I hate him, it,—whate'er his subject be,
With that worst hatred, hatred impotent.
In rooting loathing fast my youth is spent,
And in the midst the one I love the most,
My mother, dies and is a gentle ghost,
Restraining still. I sob myself to rest
And in my dreams am folded to her breast.
I lose my father more, for he in time
Commits what seems to growing youth a crime ;
For if my mother, as he says, exist
What is he better than a bigamist,
With a new wife ? To blame or not to blame,
My father does not seem to me the same
As once when he would carry " Baby Jack,"
The youngest of his children, pick-a-back,
And take his turn in sitting up when I
Fought for my life. He should have let me die.

Hating my tyrant of a master, nay,
Become impatient of parental sway,
I burn for freedom, as a paper kite,
Have it a soul, not knowing that its height
In heaven depends upon its being bound,
Snaps the tense twine and sinks at once to ground.

With what a thrill of rapture I escape
Bondage for bondage in another shape.
I am articulated in town to a law—not-*yer*,
As I have let them say, but—stationer ;
At Oxford soon in scuffles of the town
I am “ a dashing blade ” against the gown ;
But still my “ we at Oxford used to say ”
Gives colour to my “ Brasenose, M.A. ; ”
And to my “ Grace *and* Greek ” against the “ Grace ”
Only of Gospeler Ranter and his race.
Here I that once have prayed the “ Lead us not
Into temptation,” plunge thereinto, hot
With youthful lusts. But with the morning light
I loathe the sin committed overnight,
In the rebound to purity, and then,
In the rebound to filth, I fall again.
Thus for a time I play the double part,
Now Virtue and then Vice ; till, losing heart,
At last I leave the struggle to the strong
And care not if a course is right or wrong.

Thus far my body has outstript in growth
My tardier mind, for in my nature both
Develop not abreast. But now my mind
Bids fair to leave my body far behind ;
I study logic, metaphysic, Greek,
Join a debating club and learn to speak.
Full soon I find myself in listeners’ eyes
And to the height of oratory rise ;
A doubtful gift is mine, by Milton’s ghost !
Who are his eloquent ?—the devils most,
Adam and Eve are less so till their fall,
And God the Father is the least of all.

But still, my intellectual life begun,
I break with vulgar viciousness and shun
Coarse, commonplace companions, though I shall
Turn my wild oats themselves to capital ;
Though this experience of vice is wind :
The perfect preacher shall have never sinned.

Our clubbists sit on one occasion late,
“ Is there a god ? ” the subject of debate.
One member has agreed to argue “ Nay ” ;
“ Ay ” falls to me to give the Lord fair play,
Though I have dropt a holy God that makes
Against our mental and our moral rakes ;
I should not think about Him once a week
If other people did not write and speak.
Soon my opponent in debate I floor,
Refuting his objections but ignore
Sounder ones known ; for I suppress from youth,
A fact, and fairly, for the sake of Truth ;
Convincing others I myself persuade
Against the grain, till, with my powers arrayed,
My self-love is enlisted on the side
Of that *Ens Entium* whom I have denied,
And triumphs when, the question at the close
Put to the club, the *Ayes* exceed the *Noes*,
So that the chairman summing up declares
A verdict found for God ; in fine he dares
To prophesy that I shall yet adorn
A pulpit, for I am a preacher born ;
I pocket this affront as it appears :
“ There is a God ” is ringing in my ears.

I turn to my New Testament to see
The flaws they speak of, lest I have to be

A Christian as a Theist. Flaws I find,—
Mere negligible fractions to my mind :
The drift is all ; the text is not inspired ;
The look and tone that modified or fired
Sayings are mute. Still, above fictive powers
Of portraiture, the central Figure towers,—
Far and away above his chroniclers,
Far and away beyond his followers.
The Baptist must decrease ; the mighty Paul,
The prince of letter writers, is but small
Compared with Him. The Leader of the Host
Across the desert to the Syrian Coast,
The picturesque Elijah, prophet, sage,
The glorious dead of every clime and age,—
Past, present, future, will not all in one
Outweigh the Man of Men, the paragon
Of teachers and of moralists, august
And practically God. One needs adjust
Oneself to Him or perish. But I pause
Before surrender. Strict I find His laws
And hard His terms of peace. At last I yield
To Him the full possession of the field ;
I dwell within his shadow or his light
Whose presence maketh noon, whose absence night.

A sickness opportune affords me space
To plan my coming pilgrimage of grace.
No sooner do I learn than I must teach
In schools and cottages ; and next I preach
To crowds and get into the *Local Mail*,
That gives my points as if I were for sale :
“ Voice musical ; below the medium height ;
Head well thrown back and shoulders showing fight ;

Indeed the lines about the mouth proclaim
The struggler with an inner brute to tame ;
Brows black, that can express if not control
Pride, scorn and every feeling of the soul ;
A striking face, portentous forehead, shock
Of stubborn hair aspiring." People flock
From far and wide to hear him that would win
—For zeal is evangelical—from sin.
I love the life and if I had my way
I would not hold a brief and preach for pay ;
But, not to drain my father's purse, I take
A Baptist pastorate, and also make
Lucy, my first disciple, who delays
Never her praise till all the world shall praise,—
Lucy my wife, and prove myself sincere
By living on some ninety pounds a year,
Refusing thrice the sum. I learn in time
The letter killeth in our northern clime,
And seek to alter an uncomely rite,
To sprinkle, not immerse, the neophyte,
Using a drop of water, as a crumb
Of bread, in sacramental Christendom.
But the trust deeds forbidding such a course,
I then resign my pastorate perforce,
Thus bringing to a term with many tears
The holiest and the happiest of my years.

Thence come I to this town and take in charge
A "Zion," prosperous in being large ;
The men in it are smug, the women sleek.
"We pay our minister ten pound a week" ;
A tailor's wife has told the truth. My flock
Feed me ; and be it *post* or *propter hoc*,

My blessedness declines on buttered toast.
An Independent pastor is the most
Dependent on the pew, that stops supplies.
God and his sermons are his merchandise ;
He preaches to his customers. But I
Dare even my diaconate and defy ;
Because I draw a crowd and fill the pews,
Little they meddle with my ways and views ;
But never have I Judas-wise betrayed
My Master, Truth, for gold. I see the shade
Of "Zion," plain, prosaic, square and bare,
Yet stored perhaps with ancient praise and
prayer,
Soon ousted. For the thoughtful preacher draws
"A better class of hearers," and "the cause"
Swells with some members of "the upper crust,"—
A major on half pay, two dry-as-dust
Lawyers, three doctors . . . till 'tis held to be
Quite as respectable to come to me
As to frequent All Hallows, and we build
A church of ostentation, like a guild
Hall with a steeple and no bell, though I
Hold that a bell-less steeple is a lie ;
But I compound for falsehood with a desk
And a wide rostrum, that—not picturesque—
Confers a sense of freedom, which I use
Henceforward at my will. I soon refuse
Belief in, from a legendary Fall,
The guilt of man bequeathed, that may withal
Damn him before his birth to pay the cost,
The everlasting torture of the lost.
The creature may combine but not create ;
Man cannot even sin originate.

Thus far I do not breathe upon the text
But later, in addressing the Perplext,
Among *Non Credibilia* I record
The Virgin Incarnation of our Lord,
For Miracles were Parables at first
And all the steps to these must be reversed
By even the prosaic, literal, crude,
Fact-loving and truth-loathing multitude.
But now more independent than our fleet
All independent styled, we think it meet
To cut ourselves adrift therefrom. A few
More cautious or more timid of our crew
Desert us, and hereafter hostile mark
The future course of our adventurous bark ;
And loyal crews of other vessels task
Me with desertion of the fleet, and ask
If all the chiefs in councils all along
Are likelier than one leader to be wrong.
“ Is one man right ? ” they shout across the seas ;
And I shout back, “ Yea, one, Themistocles ! ”

We found another Church and call it Free.
But I no sooner gain my liberty
Than I begin to grow conservative ;
For, having passed my errors through a sieve,
I do but treasure more the golden grains
Of truth ; of sifted truth as much remains.
Idly I long for leisure to review
What faith is mine before I speak anew ;
Were I a layman I might hold my tongue
When creeds that are not mine are said and sung,
Or stay at home or saunter on the beach,
But I must off to church because I preach.

Still in my sermons gropingly I go
And thus at last arrive at my *pou sto*
—God realisable in Jesus Christ.
Farther than this I will not be enticed ;
And, being arrogant, I try to bar
Progress from others fain to go too far,—
Farther than I, and settle with a sneer
Your Scientific Lodge beyond his sphere,
Your Leather Guilds not sticking to their lasts ;
Whereat six crispins, of six social castes,
Leave in a huff. More mildly unawares,
I teach my congregation in my prayers.
“Thou couldst not be a better God,” I say,
Lauding my patent Lord, my *protégé*,
“For had I a diviner dream of Thee
Than Thou art, I were Thou, thy Deity.”
I have not dropt the prelude “Let us praise
God”—not a modest but a mouthing phrase ;
The lord commends his man, the sire the son ;
But I shall never hear our Lord’s “Well done !”

His voice is half the orator ; I pique
Myself on mine though studied, for I speak
As others sing, producing with *éclat*
My more melodious notes—Do, Mi, Fa, La ;
But not my supercilious nasal, not
My self-assertive guttural. Cool when hot,
I drive my four abreast,—think and compose,
Speak and observe ; if any yawn or doze
Or fidget, I perceive. Attention wins
Attention ; in a telling pause the pin’s
Proverbial drop is heard. And in the week,
Though Sundays are my working days, I seek

Copy, like journalists, but not for pelf,
And interviewing I report myself.
If I assist a countrywoman back
From market or a pedlar with his pack ;
If I pick up, when severed from the stalk,
A rose that may be crushed upon the walk ;
If I remember in my prayers the one
Who will succeed me when my work is done ;
If with my doubts I wrestle on the floor,
Having first duly locked my study door,
—Why lock it when I later shall admit
My people to this inner side of it ?—
Do what I may, whatever may befall,
Whatever I may feel, I tell it all ;
I have no privacy save sin ; and oft
I boast of youthful escapades, for soft
I would not be supposed. The starlit nights
At sea, the lunar bows, the polar lights,
The pageant of the dawn and down, the rare
Vision of God, the ecstasy of prayer,
The dream of Heaven, the watch with him who
dies,
Are idle if I do not utilise ;
Thus in the thick of things the thought pursues
The poet how he shall hereafter use.
But this the final act of closing page
Rehearsed but not produced upon the stage,
But this last scene impressive to behold
Will never be described by lips of gold ;
It cannot be converted into stock
Or rather into fodder for my flock ;
Myself has ceased to interest even me,
That break my shepherd's crook across my knee.

Lower temptations on a lower plane
Beset the mind, assault the soul amain ;
The sins of youth recur in middle age :
The female members of my charge engage
The lion's share of thought. A man I rub
Angles against, and younger men I snub
Because they marry maidens, who are sweet
And most amenable at a master's feet.
I am a conscious signet ring or mould
Desiring liquid wax or molten gold
To shape myself therein, and this I find
In plastic, sympathetic womankind,
That is, young womankind. Not mismatched
wives

Whom Sunday sermons help to bear their lives,
But girls invited to my study, some
For books and others for direction come,
And yet no safer is my room apart
Than the confessional in the Sacred Heart ;
For once a damsel owning she is vain
—Can she help knowing that she is not plain ?—
I question, off my guard and lover-wise,
“ What are you vain of, Ethelwyn ?—your eyes ? ”
My wife suspecting nothing, “ Have a care,”
Says, knowing women are the pastor's snare,
Wise is my Lucy, self-effacing ; so
Are all the wives of parsons that I know ;
But she is delicate and childless too,
And women are indeed my Waterloo :
Not that her weakness makes me love her less ;
Weakness awakens all my tenderness,
And oft with passes of my hands I seek
To hypnotise her ache in brow or cheek ;

Nor hers alone. I love to have it thought
That I possess mysterious powers in aught
Another man has not ; but would he share
My magic I renounce it then and there.
Being a homœopath to boot, I beat
Specialists in their own domain, and treat
A maiden whom I love, who worships me,
But dying staves off the catastrophe.
With one at once enamoured, all her charms
In fancy have I folded in my arms ;
And of all pleasures that delight the sense
The ones imagined are the most intense.
But had I children, had I daughters, then
I might behave to womankind as men
Should to my daughters. Hitherto the wrong
Is in thought only, women being strong,
And man unselfish if not fain to fold
In his embrace a woman who is cold.
So far my sin is sin defrauding shame.
Well, well, one merit and but one I claim :—
However long I grovel in the dust,—
I, that hate dust, remember with disgust
My sensual hour when past and spurn the ground,
Recoiling ever upwards in rebound.

Then Laura, visiting her native place,
Comes to my church ; her elegance and grace
Sequester her from others, and her dress
Amid our miscellaneous dowdiness,
Seems of one marble with herself—between
Madonna and the Magdalen in mien.
Madonna in ascendant now, she makes
Another new departure and forsakes

A world too soon beloved, too late abhorred.
At first I do but wish her for my Lord,
And preach my prayers and sermons for her eyes,
While she with all the soul in hers replies.
But when she droops her gaze before his own
Then, Arthur's embassy from remembrance
flown,

Lancelot muses : " Were I free to win
Her, what a wife were she to revel in ! "
But when we talk together and I hear
Her accents ringing false albeit clear,
One woman seems to speak, another glance ;
But, then, I need an out-of-door romance
From habit, and her beauty wins the day.
We meet each other in our walks and stray
Far in the dusk of unfrequented woods,
Dangerous and delicious solitudes,
Hateful hereafter as those hours I waste
In lawless passion pleasant to the taste
But bitter in the belly. All along,
My truer self at issue with the wrong,
I hope at heart when she is in the field
Against me that a woman will not yield ;
But Laura yields. My sense of duty grows
When passion is appeased. Besides, she shows
In public an imprudent wish to claim
Her big Saint Bernard lettered with her name,
Loving me more, she says in jarred-on ears,
That she has loved a man for many years.
And when her visit over, we must part,
A heavy load is lifted from my heart ;
I prize my reputation more than life ;
And then, in spite of all, I love my wife.

Alas, I have lost a pilgrim whom I might
Have led while she was making for the height !
The consequence of sin is sin ; we trip
More easily where we have made a slip.
What is she doing now ? The stone I throw
For good or ill goes farther than I go ;
My wicked act is working on and on
In others and will work when I am gone,
Though I myself repent and preach again,
More guilty pastor of less guilty men.
And before long a newer sorrow drives
The earlier deeper in. The wife of wives,
Lucy, that never loved but me, by death
Is ravished from my vision in a breath.
For our friends' sake from sudden death, O Lord,
And suicide, deliverance accord
Us. How the heart that loved too little grieves
When it is thus bereft ! Nay, Death bereaves
Rather the one that dies, for now she knows
The secret guilt that I did not disclose ;
She knows me now. I pace my floor all night
While still her ghost is lingering ere its flight,
But with averted mien. All night I crave
The grace for which the traitor crossed the
grave ;
And Jesus, doubtless, did forgive the base
Judas, as I would in the Master's place ;
But I am worse than he that sacrificed
His Lord for lucre ; and she, less than Christ,
Impugns my shabby, bastard penitence
Born of detection and of consequence,
And now recalls, as one of Earth's mistakes,
Love given in ignorance. The morning breaks

In dawn upwelling waves of light before
The sun that speeds to this from other shore
In oh, what hues to zenith ! This of all
Is the most marvellous dawn that I recall ;
Perhaps her liberated life hath lent
Its lustre to the brilliant firmament,
In token of forgiveness. As a sign
I take the comfort of that dawn divine.

Feeling myself a fraud, I long to quit
Work that might make a saint a hypocrite ;
My pen I practise in sermonic themes
Sugared in tales and unconvincing dreams ;
I am a speaker and I cannot write ;
My hymns are glorious odes if I recite,
And doggerel if others. Still I preach
In the same church with fewer flowers of speech
And scarcer tags of Latin. I have lost
Caste with myself and cannot well accost
A man of lower rank. And since I mix
Myself in what I glory—politics
On platforms, the divorce of Church and State
Married but not in Heaven, and advocate
Borough and educational reform,
At meetings when I rise to speak, a storm
Of cheers awaits me, and the while I pause
For hearing, I am humbled with applause.
Then at a mayor's banquet when my name
Is coupled with a toast, and all acclaim,
Before I speak, I ponder : " If, my host
And fellow-guests, you knew the man you toast,
Would not your faces fall as they will fall
When limping justice overtakes us all ? "

On Sunday—was it only overnight?—
The crowd of faces is upturned in light
And silence. Judas is my theme; I dare
My church and congregation to forswear
Their kinship with him; from their greed of gold,
Or other sin besetting, have they sold
Their Master. Who is he that for a mess
Of pottage, for a draught of wine, for dress,
In gratifying any nameless vice,
Is Judas and has pocketed his price?
I pause a moment for a mute reply,
And every heart makes answer, "It is I";
The preacher, "It is I." And in the place
Is Laura, but I do not see her face,
Confound it! Why should I "confound"? I am
No more a minister and may say "damn."

Some talk of my remarrying, it appears,
Has in the city come to Laura's ears,
And this, though false, has doubtless brought her down
With motor speed to this important town.
And after evening prayers she goes to see
Octavia, whom she thinks my bride-to-be,
And in a phrase asserts her prior claim
To be my wife in virtue of her shame.
She gone, Octavia sends me a request
To step across ere I retire to rest,
And I comply, with all the thuds and throes
That mortal with a guilty secret knows
At any summons. What she deems a lie
She calls upon me simply to deny.
Great is my scorn of scandal, which I leave
Alone, or brush like birdlime from my sleeve;

But it is clear that in my face the blood
Is at ebb tide and in my heart at flood ;
Octavia gazes on my livid cheek,
My lips that quiver and refuse to speak ;
The truth is flashed upon her in a breath,
And she dismisses me to what but death.

I find myself at midnight in my room,
My head between my hands, confronting doom ;
My heart is beating through the house and might
Awake the sleepers buried in the night.
I have loved solitude when brought about
By weather blocking off the world without,—
The isolation of the snow,—the rain
Safeguarding scholars from the calling train ;
But this is loneliness—not loneliness
If any trod with me the purple press.
But even now my solitude is gone,
A train of living ghosts sweeps in and on :
My foes come first, not of my virtues born,
But of my pride and arrogance and scorn ;
In triumph undisguised they wag the pate,
“ Our guardian angel armed our hearts with hate
Instinctive of this man,” say these—too spurned
By me to have their hopeless hate returned ;
One and one only gives me as he goes
The last affront of pity from our foes.
My public enemies are hard behind,
Not hiding their ungenerous joy to find
It is as they have heard : “ The wrong in creed
Are vile at heart and evil in their deed ;
So perish all such heretics,” they say,
“ That lead the little and the weak astray ! ”

Follow my fellow-citizens in haste,
Aghast as if some wanton had defaced
The statue, near the Market Hall, of stone ;
Move on ; this Hermes mutilates his own.
I see my kin with him, the most undone ;
O Father, thou hast boasted of thy son !
His hands with starting veins conceal his face ;
His was my honour, his is my disgrace ;—
My friends, their 'eyes ensouled by Sorrow, kill
Me with their looks, because they love me still ;—
My converts,—will they keep the giver's law
When he that gave it proves a man of straw ?
Laura comes last alone, with hands that give
To ghosts foregone a worse alternative ;
If I shall make our lot in life the same
I can secure her silence and my name.
She loves not it nor me. Shall I betroth
Me to a loveless woman whom I loathe ?
My wife is in her grave. With that I creep
Out of the house hushed in the death of sleep,
And find myself upon this grassy mound,
Whose relics consecrate the burial ground.

Dark is the dwelling near ; no window's light
Signals a fellow-watcher in the night.
All, all is motionless as in their bed
The silent congregation of the dead ;
The shadow still and solid as the stone ;
There is no breath but mine, Night holds her own ;
No single leaf is in an aspen stirred,
Nor owl, the chanticleer of moonlight, heard ;
Comes from the flock no bleat on yonder down ;
Mute is the neighbouring as a buried town.

The luminaries of the world, the great
Signs in the heavens are inarticulate ;
The planet speeds unheard of human ears,
For silence is the music of the spheres
Affirming but at mustering Night a place
Across a million billion miles of space.
God does not speak ; He will not, if He can,
Break the long silence terrible to man ;
He gives no sign. Is there a god at all
To answer or to hear us when we call ?
There is no god, not even for my sake ;
And I myself am nothing but an ache :
The universe is centred in the smart,
The beat, of this poor solitary heart ;
And that I live there is this token, this,—
I suffer, suffer in a blank abyss
Life, that alone is hell. But I may cease
And be with my beloved dead at peace.
This is the starting-point, and this the goal.
I slay my body that have slain my soul.

DEAD

Un amour éteint ne se rallume point.—GENLIS.

I WAKE in the dead of the night
To a hand . . . what is it I hold ?
The moonbeam is not so white,
Marble is not so cold.

This motionless heap at my side,
That is shaped like a shroud by the clay,
Perhaps it is Love that has died
In the night ; —or is it the day ?

His hand is a thing,—so chill
It curdles my blood. Not a breath
Passes his lips that are still
As the frost. The silence is death.

Is it death or sleep after all ?
“ It is I, that was once so dear,
It is I, beloved, that call.” . . .
He does not answer nor hear.

I will chafe his hand ; he may live
And my pulses would quicken a stone. . . .
It returns not the pressure I give ;
It falls when I loosen my own.

“Come back from the dead for my sake,
O Love, whom perhaps I have killed.” . . .
No warmth in his hand I wake ;
It is only mine that is chilled.

The lamp will relumine the bower,
The sea will return to the shore,
The clods that are frozen will flower,
But the dead will not live any more.

When the sky shall rekindle the land,
And winter and night shall have fled,
They will find us at dawn, the hand
Of the dead in the hand of the dead.

ASCENSION DAY

Even from the flower till the grape was ripe hath my heart
delighted in wisdom.—*Ecclesiasticus*.

IN MEMORIAM, W.E.G.

THE best has happened ; page
The last is turned for ever ;
let us give
Thanks ! in this land and age
“ Self-seeking ” and “ degenerate,” man may live
The life heroic, die
The death angelic after service high.

O ye that love him, come,
Your formal phrase of lamentation cease,
Beat not the muffled drum,
Nor with the sound of mourner mar his peace ;
No *misereres* say,
Nor dirges ; shout *magnificats* to-day.

In Britain's annals bright
His name amongst her noblest shall appear ;
A king of men, a knight
Peerless of God, without reproach or fear :
The guerdon which he won
Was not aggrandisement of self or son.

His guerdon was the great
And lot-alleviating aim achieved,—
The sorrow, not of fate,
Which some inflict and some endure, relieved,—
And immemorial wrong
Uprooted for the weak against the strong.

And on the summit placed,
The power he prized for people's weal alone,
He recked not, but embraced
The righteous cause as if—it *was* his own,
Espousing, spite of scorn,
Lost enterprises high and hopes forlorn.

“Lost”!—what is lost? Betrayed
By feeble friends as inexpedient, crost
By faction and delayed,
The just, the noble cause, is never lost,
Her champions cannot fail,
For Truth and Right and Freedom shall prevail.

The struggling, the opprest,
The poor, the helpless, did a helper find
And patron in his breast;
In criticism courteous and kind,
Genius without a name
He recognised and lifted into fame.

The country of his birth
Not only claimed this citizen renowned
Of every State on Earth;
His heart not isled by rock and ocean bound
Beat high for your release
Across the seas, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece.

He saw thy bleeding land,
Thy burning wrongs, Armenia ! his thy pain,
Nations on every hand
Consenting to thy slaughter, armed in vain,
Thy bosom—in thy throes
Female—defenceless, naked to thy foes.

His life is now complete
And fashioned of one marble. Boyhood brave,
Obedient ; youth discrete,
Devout ; strong manhood strenuous, grave ;
And age serene, sublime ;—
Was his, whose every season was his prime.

The hoary-headed can
Recall not nor retrieve the vanished hour ;
But, maiden, youth or man,
Live all thy life ; the fruit is in the flower,
The part may mar the whole,
The greatest are the great from goal to goal.

Thee since thy term is brief
Shall less than every span of life suffice ?
Consume it not in grief,
Pause not for pleasure, dally not with vice ;
The runner that would win
The race before him doth at once begin.

And, if thou turn aside,
Never the path of error proved pursue ;
Rather, with him belied,
Be branded inconsistent than untrue :
So he, with parted breath,
Shall bless his England, which he loved, in death.

WHITSUNTIDE

Our blest Redeemer ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A guide, a comforter, bequeathed,
With us to dwell.—H. AUBER.

WHEN Christ was carried from their view
To sacred Salem came
The Spirit on the faithful few
In tongues of flame.

Full oft he came before that time
To saint and seer and sage
Of every race, in every clime
And every age.

The psalms of Hebrew bards, their sighs
For woes to come were His ;
And still the true words of the wise
Are prophecies.

And still are men inspired to preach,
Inspiring in their turn ;
Inspired to hear, inspired to teach,
Inspired to learn.

Nor deem that only words will come
To give the soul release,
Some are inspired to speak and some
To hold their peace.

For them no phrases blunt or keen
Like wingèd heralds speed ;
Nor threat nor promise runs between
Resolve and deed.

The prompting Spirit doth impel
Them rather to fulfil
The "lowlier" task that waits them, well
Than "loftier" ill.

These like a tidal river bare
Their bosom to the Main,
Becoming one with That in prayer
Never in vain.

The Holy Spirit sets his seal
In loveliness of face,
In noble bearing, form ideal
And gentle grace.

Howe'er that Universal Heart
In silence pass, the Whole
Is circulating in the part,—
The separate soul.

The soul itself at birth inspired
Can close itself at will,
Or open and be filled and fired
With strength and skill.

The most creative minds the most
Receptive claim to be ;
Who sang supremely makes his boast
It was not he.

For him the very air is rife
 With feeling, and the breath
He breathes is leavened with the life
 Exhaled in death.

In this encircling atmosphere
 The bard and saint abide,
And every hour of all the year
 Is Whitsuntide.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Quicunque vult, etc.

S AINT ATHANASIUS *redivivus*, I
Though canonised am now sent back to ply
My task again,—again to live and die.

In my foregone existence from my youth
A primate, persecuted without ruth,
I dared the world for what I deemed the truth.

I wrote a mass of volumes, yet my fame
Rests not on what I wrote or care to claim,
But on a creed that bears my borrowed name.

For Man—that perched at apex of the cone
Cannot conceive a brood above his own—
The greatest man is God, the great Unknown.

But this incompetence of human thought
Cannot affirm or prove or cancel aught
Of creeds by bishops in assemblies wrought.

Jesus, who prayed before his race was run
His might be one *as* God and he were one,
Declared the Father greater than the Son ;

And when that foe, the final, Death shall fall,
The Son himself, according to Saint Paul,
Shall be subjected to the All in All.

Such witnesses for them shall plead their cause
It is not ours to judge, and bid us pause
Before pronouncing the damnation clause.

The world has moved in thrice five hundred years ;
And this Platonic-Christian creed appears
High-sounding gibberish in my modern ears.

But let the sense—if sense the creed express—
Pass, or the drift of sense, for I confess
It is the spirit that I love still less.

In this my present life the dauntless will
And courage kings and councils could not kill,
Make Athanasius *contra mundum* still.

Therefore, not being of an ovine breed,
And from an age of persecutors freed,
I sit when all men stand to say *my* creed.

BARNABY BRIGHT

Internum æternum.—S. AUGUSTINE.

JUNE is the sweetest of all the moons
And this—the last—the sweetest of Junes ;
And day the dearest of all, of all
Days that have fallen or shall befall,
Richest in shadow, fullest of light,
Is Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

We pause together entranced in glade
Of grove aquiver with light and shade,
The long-drawn note of appeal ere this
Has died in ecstasy's silent bliss ;
Hushed is the hour in the kindling light
Of Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

And see the moon in the east that glows
Again, is flushed for a while with rose ;
Her horn is full and will blanch the hues,—
The topaz, the ruby, the sapphire of dews :
The stems of larches are shafts of light
On Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

Ah me ! the moments have flown, have flown ;
Where are the hours that made thee my own ?
Time is not time that is throbbed with thee ;
Moments eternal are those that flee ;
That melt in one like the light in light
Of Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

DEDICATION

Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen
Mach' ich die kleinen Lieder.—HEINE.

O THOU that dwellest in the sky
And listenest to the lark,
I am thy bird of song, but I
Sing only in the dark :
But I
Sing only in the dark.

Leave, then, the lark his space and light
And love and all day long ;
And me, my God, then, give the night
And loneliness and song :
The night
And loneliness and song.

AN OLD POET AND A POET'S EPITAPH

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.—TENNYSON.

[The words in italics are those of the listener.]

HERE from the bench we'll watch, until it goes,
The mellow evening of midsummer close ;
And, smoking a cigar to please me, yawn
You will not if I prose till dusk or dawn,
On this retired and natural terrace, green
And starred with gold, where nothing comes between
Us and the hills and not a house is seen,
Not even mine hard by. It were a sin
On sunny days to loiter long therein.
My studio is the painter's open air,
Reception-room and oratory there,
For roof and dome extinguish thought and prayer.
Besides, miss whom I may within my doors,
I miss no man or woman on the moors,
Well worn by me, to you the virgin page
We turn to-morrow, when I will engage
To tramp as far as youth, in spite of age,
Which I am given to forget among
You younger men, because my heart is young,
Because my brain is still my willing slave
In the decline so gradual to the grave.

And if we die to-morrow, I must think
You are all as old as I. Read Maeterlinck.

“ Oh, I’m so glad, so glad that I’m alive ! ”

A girl said long ago ; and you that hive
Delicious hopes may well at twenty-five
Be buoyant and, unconscious of the ground,
Conscious of bays as if already crowned.
And crowned you may be when your head is gray,
For you, you also are a poet.—*Nay,*

*A poetaster, or a minor bard,
On whom the minor critic is so hard,
Appearing, Horace wrested, to deny
A man’s a man that is not eight feet high.*
—Which is absurd as Euclid would reply ;

A poet is a poet, great or small :
Is not a weed a wild flower after all ?
*The critic, posing as a victim, eyes
A rubbish heap of printed verse and cries,
Reviewing more, the wretch ! than man may read,
“ Your poet is as common as a weed.”*

But I, who have wandered widely through mankind
And leave to-day some sixty years behind,—
Years longer than another’s, I declare
The poet of whatever height is rare ;
I never held his hands or read his brow
Or saw the colour of his eyes till now.
For if we have not with the public found
Favour, the worst of being unrenowned
Is that we toil alone and fail to win
Acquaintance with our intellectual kin.
The poet’s chances, in his rarer sphere,
Are less than royal of a friend or peer ;

Princes, compared with him, are usual things,
And bardic blood is bluer than a king's.

All men are lonely ; and of all I know
The poet is the loneliest. *Better so ?*
Yes, for his rhymes, since if the rhymer show
These ere he finish they are never done ;
And if he speak of these before begun,
Remain they will in Limbo. I, for one,
Have suffered isolation. She that bare
My body—see the Curse of Baudelaire—
Conceiving not my soul, renounced her share
In my true self, from boyhood vowed to song,
Scorning with mother instinct sure and strong
Poems not hymns ; the Church can do no wrong,
And Muse—Apollo's—would have perished quite,
Had not religion saved for God in rite,
Through this our age, the darkest. Out of sight
I stowed my luckless rhymes as soon as made,
Pursuing art without tutorial aid
Or sympathy parental, like a trade
Or love illicit. Ay, it were a crime
Could it be crushed. And thus I served my time,
And serve it still, to language, rhythm, rhyme.

Poeta nascitur, the bard is born,
The sacred bard, though coarser vessel scorn
Finer and ask, “ Why hast thou formed him thus,
O Potter, not consulting him or us ? ”
The bard is born, born with a keener sense
Of beauty, born with passion more intense,
And haply not with understanding less,
Needing far more, than other men possess,

Just as a larger hold to breast the gale
Befits the craft that flies a bigger sail ;
It is the builder's work to make it stout :
God in His poet let another flout,
The Potter knows His business, past a doubt.

Poeta nascitur, poeta fit ;

The bard is born, the bard is made, admit.
Poets, there are with sense the sixth acute
And fully charged with feeling, that are mute,
And but the strains of happier bards rehearse ;
Poets there were before the art of verse,—
Winds fabulous within their cavern pent,
Fountains unsunned, volcanoes without vent,
Till one translated into song the beat
That rhythmic pulses, pinions, waves repeat,
And taught the magic power of measured strain
To rouse the breast in war and lull in pain ;
The bard was made at last and found relief
For surplusage of passion, love and grief.

The bard is made : read when you do not write,
Study the master singers and recite
In their own tongue. What these did not disdain
Neglect not,—grace of assonance, pause, refrain,
And rhyme well built as verse that would atone
For song bereaved of Echo. Add your own
Grace in new stanzas ; vary measures ; blame
The bastard Muse whose numbers are the same ;
Passion is not the same. Avoid what best
Because most briefly is in prose exprest
Without inversions. License is allowed
To poets ; take it not. Woo from the crowd

Of words the one and only ; some, like " flame,"
Are poems and pictures in themselves. Reclaim
Some, but do not debase our mother tongue,
More than their land to poets, else unsung.
And, thanks to them, the fittest words arrive,
The sweet, the strong, the sounding still survive.
Force not the Muse ; the Muse is chaste and lust
Is barren, but sing only what you must
Because you must. Your trend discovered trust,—
Lyric, dramatic, epic, though to me
The Muse of Muses is Melpomene.

Do I believe in inspiration ? What
Bard but believes ? although my thought were not,
My measure is inspired ; besides, what cost
Me least is best ; the bad is labour lost.
But what may be that intermittent power,
Strange and inscrutable, the poet's dower,
Whether the treasure of his under soul
Unconscious, or the bounty of the Whole
Human, divine, or both, I cannot tell ;
But this I know,—that mine is for a spell
The power to draw at seasons unforecast,
Much as my nature limited may hold,
On fountains unpolluted in so far
As poet do not sully them and mar
What else were perfect. Well the singer knows
The flood of inspiration ebbs and flows ;
And when it ebbs the novice labours, since
Create he must if only to convince
Himself he lives. However hard he strive
He cannot better than a brat of five,

Unless his little fist be firmly held
And fingers by a hand expert impelled,—
He cannot of himself command a pen
To scrawl a line. The mightiest poet when
His hour is over is as other men.

Brief and delicious is the Muse's reign,
Her interregnum long and full of vain
And grievous effort if the poet fain
To fill it—for the Muse's vacant seat
Is the Siege Perilous—shall dare complete
In frost the lyric he began in heat ;
But till the summer time of song return
Let poets in their winter blot and burn
Rather than finish uninspired ; and learn
Time to begin is also time to end,
Or mend, if there is any time to mend ;
Correction is most crass when most required :
What is improvable was not inspired.
God finishes as he goes, my friend ; the meed
Bitter or sweet is in the very deed,
As surely as the flower is in the seed.

Live when you do not write. You may not shirk
The duties of the citizen, the work
Of teacher, trader, farmer, artisan,
Whereby you live ; the poet is a man
Not less but more than others. If you dwell
In the black breath of towns, the Poet's Hell,
You will in leisure of impulsion roam
Into the poet's land, the poet's home,
The poet's heaven,—the country. If your lot
Is laid like mine in some secluded spot,

Travel to cities—pictures, music, plays
And minsters. But preserve us from the craze
Of tourists beauty-hunting in a host !
Dull is the soul that seeks a foreign coast
For fairer fields than these, while summer dreams,
Mantling with buttercups and flush with streams.
Where out of Cornwall is a road like ours,
Not Devon lane, so banked with ferns and flowers ?
Where else is Wessex combe, or Cumbrian mere,
Or Surrey dene, or Sussex down, but here
In this enchanted isle of many a mood,
In this dear land our mother, whom we would
Not change with any, were she thrice as good.
Where are the slender bluebell's stalks in ropes
Coiled but on Caledonia's banks and slopes ?
Where out of " holy Ireland " will you hail
The Saint's own heather ? Loved like Innisfail,
By names as fond, by names as many known,
Was ever greener isle in sweeter zone ?
Finished as Albion, with a loving hand
Dwelling on details, lives another land ?
Is not that realm of snows, the sea-less Swiss,
But a rough draft, not yet filled in, to this ?
Do not our moors, this hither side of Tone,
Crimson and gold with blossoms interblown,
Or in our grand November burning bright
With brake, outbid the Switzer's black and white ?
Have we not seen, from dips in Dorset, seas
Blue as the cradle of the Cyclades ?
Are not our sapphire skies in after glows
Eddied with amber, amethyst and rose ?
Are our stars wanting in the balance weighed,
The silver splendours of the moon allayed ?

Here is not Earth as pitilessly fair,
Insufferably sublime as elsewhere ?
Heaven,—is it not as near ? He must be dull
Indeed that wanders for the beautiful.

Not for the fair but other fair we stray ?
Ay, take *cum grano salis* all I say.

Live when you do not write. I have let fall
The fatal word, which I would fain recall,
For life is love, and this, a pitfall, hath
Ensnared the pilgrim poet in his path.
Seek not affection ; go not forth to meet
Love if his voice is heard in grove or street ;
Nor out of windows look, nor if he knock
At doors admit him ; till he force the lock
And break the bolt and burst the barrier, wait ;
Snatch not a boon, if boon it be, from Fate.
And be your heart a sovereign lady's throne,
Seek not to reign in hers and reign alone.
Knowing myself and all my ways and woes
And weakness, I have cried, " Alas for those
That love me ! " With his memories of the past,
The woman whom he worships is the last
Woman whose love a man shall strive to gain.
Smile if you will, but do not miss the main
Point, and conceal your passion for her sake
And yours awhile, lest this alone awake
Hers, and the love of being loved she take
For love of you ; but let her feeling lead
Less errant than your own ; and never plead
Your cause with one indifferent or cold ;
But go your ways and find the strength ensouled
In fate envisaged and in grief controlled.

O man, remember,—you that would be free,
Solitude is the price of liberty.

But have you plighted faith with any, hear
What most behoves the bard to mark and fear :
Look not to be beloved as you will love.
The butterfly with butterfly, the dove
With dove, are mated in the mead and bower ;
The ten white petals of the starlike flower
Pair into five ; but poets, with the great,
Great lovers, almost never find their mate.
What woman not the Lesbian bard returns
The love of Shakespeare, Leopardi, Burns
And Laureate till a peer unparalleled ?
These have in passion as in song excelled
Women, that are not lofty poets. Male
Is the great singer, like the nightingale.
Since Sappho's passion for a woman, name
Female is not in the front ranks of fame
Poetic ; *for, say you, the Fates refuse
Woman, not Sappho, man's sufficient muse,
Motive and toast—herself, of sex we call
Delightful while it holds our own in thrall,
And when her empire ceases ours departs.*
Ay, woman not in the creative arts,
Science, or war, or politics supreme,
Woman, our muse, is novel-writer's theme,
Painter's superb despair and poet's dream.
In this dumb show, the scene of mortal things,
Man is a puppet ; woman pulls the strings :
Now making wars and treaties now with kings,
Brandishing swords for sceptres, chucking crowns
Like marbles, sinking navies, sacking towns,

Women are Helens all ; if not inspired,
Inspiring : but for sex beloved, admired,
Where were the sonnets, where the songs, and where
The strains that voice and voicing lull despair ?

The poet feels more passion for his bride
Than she for him ; but generous hearts abide
Not thoughts of barter, and I like not phrase,
Though pretty, "love for love." To him who weighs
Or measures love for merchandising, sure,
"How much," is not the question, but "how pure."
And man's is mixed with so much baser stuff
That any gentle girl is good enough
For him she weds, whatever name he boast :
A woman loves the best ; a man the most.
However high the flood of passion swell,
The one that loves not wisely loves not well.
Therefore, O Poet, think not to produce
For perjured vows this witness in excuse,—
Love vaster than one woman can requite.
The bard of all men should the least invite
The fickle god of weather, Jove, to laugh,
Seeing his realm is Memory's larger half
—Imagination, which can raise the dead,
Which Proteus lacks and so demands instead
A picture of his mistress to replace
In absence brief an else forgotten face.
The poet is a lover all his life,
And needs no portrait of his friend and wife.
Born to be constant, bards, alas ! have been
Inconstant, then licentious, last obscene.
For nascent passion favours song, I mean

Erotic song, and singer mercantile
Traffics with Love for Song's sake, till the vile
Habit of fickleness is fast. Beware
Of Burns's regimen, nor set a snare
To trap the Muse. *You love the Bard of Ayr?*
And I,—none more than him. But break not
oath

With woman whom you trust. And if her growth
Seem not to tally with your own in mind,
Seek not in others what you shall not find
In any, nor in all. It were insane
To wed a woman whom her stars ordain
To shun the Muse and all the Muse's train ;
Nature or art, whichever suffer, cries
Against unequal, morganatic ties.
Undine wooed and wed a mortal knight,
But marriage was disastrous to the sprite ;
Nor did the knight himself escape unharmed
For having crossed the magic circle charmed.
But still I count the poet blest if bound
To one of taste refined and judgment sound,
A lover of the beautiful, his first
Listener, that in the poet's art unversed
Will mark a blemish in his line, nor store
Her disapproval till a critic gore ;
And will perceive a beauty, nor withhold
Her praise until the world's have made her bold.
To her from bard indebted much is due
The homage of a heart devout and true.
But if the friendship of his youth outgrown
And flung as insufficient, he disown,
Joy shall evade him even in the arms
Of others ere he sicken of their charms ;

Waking and sleeping shall he be pursued
Out of the crowd and into solitude
By phantom face remembered with regret
Poignant and mute remorse, that never yet
Begot a vigorous verse except to warn
The novice, with a hope confest forlorn.
If only for the Muse's sake eschew
The paths of lawless pleasure, and renew
The vows renunciant in the bard's career.
Believe the dictum of the sage and seer
That every thought unjust, or dream unchaste,
Or careless act unkind, or aim debased
In art pursuing popular applause,
That damns the man degrades the poet, flaws
The marble, cracks the colour, blurs the line.
Thus a forerunner learnt the Will Divine ;
For crushed and shattered is the man that runs
Seeing or blindly counter to the suns.

*But—wherefore “but”—you say that while the right,
And true are saint's and sage's chief delight,
The poet's is the beautiful ; and art,
Nor moral, nor immoral, plays a part
Unmoral.” This I hold. And though it seem
To quarrel with my warning, as you deem,
It is not mine to reconcile but state
Truths that I leave another to relate.
From this an i-dot will I not retract :—
The poet shall be pure in thought and act
And purpose, fearing, not desiring, praise
Before his best be done. Perhaps his lays
Will die with him. In my Victorian days,*

Little new verse was conned in any shape,
Excepting that of Tennyson and his ape ;
Now next to none is read, and soon perhaps
None will be made, and Poetry will lapse
With arts irrevocably lost. Why, those
That started poets vary verse with prose,
Till poets they are . . . *not* ; one cannot play
Jekyll and Hyde for ever and a day.
Well, let our rhymes, not having seen the light,
Perish with us, shall universal Night
Not swallow all ? and shall we therefore spare
Pains, for to make not read is our affair ;
For would God's Universe, His Poem, be
Less lovely were there none save Him to see ?
In the lush undergrowth of lane and shaw
Was the spring flower less fair that no one saw ?
Who sees at dead of night the lunar bows
Spanning the heavens above the virgin snows
Of unascended Himmalehs ? In mould
Perfect as ours in space are planets rolled
Which none have yet beheld, nor shall behold,
But God, who did for his delight create
What conscious creature shall not desecrate.
Each flower that fades and man that dies forecast
The night that shall no morrow see. The vast
Rivers shall shrink, the ocean shall subside
And like a dewdrop in the sun be dried,
The sun himself extinguished like a spark
Shall halt as blind as worlds now cold and dark.
Who knows ? but this we know from yonder sky
God hath the heart to let his glories die,
Unsparring of his wonders. Death devours
His works to-day, and why not these of ours ?

Thus have I said things I did not design
To say, with graver words and what, in fine,
I never thought to give when I began.
Pardon me, for the power I cannot scan
And far less comprehend has led me on,
And now the day departs, the glows are gone.
You'll come into my cottage near and share
My Spartan not my Sybaritic fare ;
And after that you shall inspect my books.
This is the way. See those two homing rooks
After the voyage of the day, with might
Unflagging in the rhythm of their flight,
Together as it chances, for in droves,
Packs, flocks or swarms the sentient creature roves ;
Or singly ; saving at his lord's behest :
Man only with his fellow moves abreast.

A POET'S EPITAPH

Here is my body laid under the sod,
To mix with the dust as my soul with God.
Love was a rapture that lasted not long ;
Man gave me sorrow and God gave me song.

Pause by my relics, but ask not my name
Whether ignored or remembered by Fame ;
Pity not, envy not, ban not or bless :
Song was my failure and song my success.

Life brimming over was mine from my birth,
But the prophet's burden makes not for mirth,
The poet's conscience refuses him rest
Till his dream is told, his passion exprest.

Look at the flowers in the meadows for me ;
None more than I loved the sky and the sea
Through my bars of flesh before my release :
Life gave me passion and Death gave me peace.

THE DESERTED ENCAMPMENT

There is one event to all.—*Ecclesiastes*.

I LEAVE behind the bustling crowd,
The street—where relic, fair to view,
Is made a discord by the loud,
Officious and aggressive new—
The vulgar villas spick and span,
The miles of walls and roofs in rows,
My fellow—not my fellow—man
And his interminable prose.

I shake the dust of every town
From off my feet ; ill could I spare
The grass and thyme and room of down
To marble halls however fair :
I would not change the fields afire
At eve for gates and streets that gleam
With pearl and gold, to stricken lyre
Arising in the poet's dream.

I clear the plain, I cross the plank
Over the stream and climb the brow
Of brightly-variegated bank,
Whose summit is the open. How
The parting day before its flight
Kindles the gorse's golden bloom,
Here laving all the hills with light,
There flooding all the glens with gloom.

At summit of the bank in dearth
Of breath my limbs at length I cast
Prone on the breast of Mother Earth,
My prime consoler and my last ;
How oft in youth of peace deprived,
Retiring from the fight alone,
At touch of Earth have I revived,
Her great heart beating through my own.

Anon I fare again in hope
To scale the top of yonder ridge
Ere Night invade the world and slope
To slope with solid darkness bridge.
But what is in this open space
Above the bank, beneath the height ?—
The print of horses' hoofs, the trace
Of human feet in mimic fight.

The grass is worn, the ground is scarred ;
And still the wounded sod not healed
Discovers where the troops that guard
Our island held the tented field ;
And there illumined by the rays
The herald dust announced the tramp
Of foot and hoof on weary ways
Whitened between the town and camp.

But now where open field was barred
And space sequestered by canteen,
The sward is infinitely starred
With flowers that light a heaven of green ;

The bugle, drum and cannon break
No more the music of the rills,
Nor ribald jest and laughter wake
The sacred silence of the hills.

And then exulting as I paced
The grass in this my solitude
Again recovered for the waste
From camp and city which intrude,
I thought without a sigh's regret
That as the fields and woods retreat
Before the town and suburb, yet
The field shall trespass on the street.

The day shall be when yonder roofs
And walls are levelled to the ground,
And of their very site the proofs
Convincing pilgrim are not found ;
The day shall be when not a sign
Of city sunken on the plain
In curve, or square, or stone, or mine,
Or mound, or harbour shall remain.

The day shall dawn when not a plan
Of busy brains that dream and strive
On Earth o'erridden now by man
And his memorials, shall survive ;
The fairest picture ever limned,
The grandest poem oft rehearsed,
The most melodious anthem hymned,
Shall be forgotten as the worst.

The night shall come when deed of day
Shall be though brightly wrought undone,
The perquisite of dull decay ;
When what advantage hath been won
In life's arena shall be lost ;
When she that kindled love or lust
To passion gratified or crost,
Shall be, with those that sought her, dust.

The goods that Fate at random flings
And men in scramble strive to clutch,
Are vain and perishable things
That crumble even at our touch ;
It soothes me reft of all to know
The proper term to wealth and fame,
To toil and ease, to bliss and woe,
Success and failure, is the same.

Is, then, this life not worth our pains ?—
The virtuous as the wicked deed ?
Ah no ! I leave to better brains
And purer hearts than mine their creed ;
I do but dwell upon the thought
That as the countless years revolve,
The scaffold, for the spirit fraught,
Of this material, shall dissolve.

I am too sick at heart to please
Myself with hopes that when my days
Are closed with this or that disease,
I may revisit Earth and gaze

On her deserted camp, where well
I fought and stood, where—so the years
Strip us of pride—I fought and fell
And soaked the sod with blood and tears.

But if I visit after death
The scene of my disaster, glad
I shall be, not to breathe the breath
Of life in world where love was sad,
And effort failed, and trust betrayed,—
Shall feel as once within the court,
Which nettles hold and briars invade,
Of Sarum's long-abandoned fort.

And yet, though Death at last must take
The encampment of my mortal life,
I hold it for my comrades' sake ;
Nor yet to you that love the strife
Of spirits, do I fling the glove
Of challenge ; I salute the few,
And I am one of those, that love
Old Sarum better than the New.

TO A DROOPING ASH TREE

There is a spirit in the woods.—WORDSWORTH.

SACRED Ash, in northern nights I pause beneath
thee,
Gazing up at branches, bare of leaf and blossom,
Golden with the fruitage of the stars in clusters.

Glorious Ash, in summer noons I stand bareheaded
In thy stately dome of pendent shadows, doing
Homage to thy grace—the overflow of beauty.

Tender Ash, thou risest ever higher heavenward,
So to droop thy form of woman lower earthward,
And I worship thee as if thou wert a woman.

Still I do not know thee ; Lore and Science vainly
Lead us round and round the borderland of being,
Nor betray the secret, though they tremble on it.

What, oh what, may be the burden of the beeches
When no breath is stirring and the trees are swaying
In their solemn councils on the knoll at nightfall ;—

What the secret that is fast as bridal chamber
Closed before the hush of passionate espousals
In the purple heart of perfect flower of splendour ?

Dead and lost is now the language of the warbler,
All unspelled, unknown the meaning of his sequence,
Undivined the note of liquid, broken rapture.

Stately tree, that spreadest up and out and under,
Till thy foliage, drooping like a woman's tresses,
Sweep my troubled brows and soothe with sylvan
touches,

Thee I love and me thou mayst, with wistful passion
Conscious of a presence, struggling to interpret,
Like two lovers knowing not each other's language.

Still with all my thinking, dreaming, poring nightly,
Piercing darkness even, little is my knowledge,
Little is it, and that little Love hath taught me.

Love it is that holds the secret of Existence,
Love is the magician, summoning the spirit.
Love is the diviner, Love the divination.

Is it mere component stem and branch and tendril,
Leaf of colour, leaf of light and leaf of shadow,
Thus appealing to the heart that does obeisance,

Breathing from thy limbs of boughs and locks of
foliage
Thoughts that into language may not be translated,
Feelings that may never into thought be rendered ?

If the soul thou art were but the Universal,
Were my feeling individual ? wouldst thou move me
Other thou another daughter of the forest ?

134 TO A DROOPING ASH TREE

Body is the phantom, soul alone the substance,
Outward shows are shadows symbolising being ;
Shadows come and go but substance, soul remaineth.

Let the fond illusion die upon the river,
Let the shadows, shows and phantoms fade in shadow,
Let the visible be swept away to-morrow,

Fearless we will sit secure of final issue,
Naught shall be dislodged but where it was abiding,
Left us all we love to have and hold for ever.

SUMMER LILIES

I liken my lady to the lilies.—GUIDO GUINICELLI.

I FOUND not her I love in halls and bowers
Intent on music, broidery or books,
And sought her in her garden with her flowers.

Across my vision flashed in summer sheen
Heightened with shade entrapped in lurking nooks,
Three colours in the sun—gold, white and green.

And pressing onwards I became aware
Of separate splendours blazoned on blue skies ;
Yes, lilies shining white and tall and fair.

Like a seventh lily that surpassed in height
Her sisters from her forehead to her eyes,
She stood among the lilies in the light.

In her fair locks her head was aureoled
And drooped like theirs upon its stately stem ;
Her colours were the same—white, green and gold.

But when her heavenly eyes encountered mine
I saw the flowers in her, not her in them,
Transfigured out of floral to divine.

My other senses drowned in sight, I heard
No syllable of salutation kind,
Nor thrall'd by spells of the magician, stirred.

Her silence roused me and I answered : " I
Was deaf and dumb because I was not blind,
Too full of you to hear and make reply.

" Is it not said that every woman grows
Like to some flower—the hollyhock, the pink,
The pansy, the convolvulus, the rose ?

" You look so like the flowers by which you stand,
Or they look so like you, that you may link
The lilies to the ladies of the land."

No word interpreting her wistful gaze,
I said in deprecation : " Love, forgive ;
I am so candid that I sometimes praise."

She made reply : " The sun above us sees
Of women that divinely love and live
No woman to compare with one of these."

I turned unto the lilies where they grew
And asked them : " And are you, ye lilies, pray,
Like her who says that she is not like you ? "

And these methought made answer where they stood
In sovereign state : " No, not a lily may
Compare with her, the flower of womanhood."

WHEN WE WERE FRIENDS

Strangers pass as friends and friends as strangers.

LONGFELLOW.

I PLANTED in my friend's parterre
The Lady's Mantle passing fair,
And by mistake a Mallow too
That seemed, their leaves so closely grew,
Almost the same, when we were friends,
When we were friends.

The scalloped leaf, the Mantle, holds
At morn, in seven unfurling folds,
Cuplike, its splendid drop of dew
Which blessed my coarser Mallow too,
So close their roots when we were friends,
When we were friends.

Parting, I thought to part the flowers,
Whose lot perhaps was one with ours ;
But she said, " Spare, so prosper you,
The Mantle and the Mallow too."
And yet we were no longer friends,
No longer friends.

WHEN WE WERE FRIENDS

I wonder if to-day she spares
—Our lots perhaps are one with theirs—
The Mantle and the Mallow too,
Who, leaf and flower, so closely grew
And intergrew when we were friends,
When we were friends.

If these, each day more intergrown,
Though not for my sake for their own,
She cherish still, to part the two
Were now a harder thing to do
Than long ago when we were friends,
When we were friends.

A MODERN CASSANDRA

[*A letter with the comments of the receiver printed in italics.*]

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

J. FLETCHER.

FRIEND, while I fold your letter in my hand,
I feel the height of desk at which you stand ;
You stand to work ?—*I do*—at window flung
Wide on a lawn, *a grass plot in my tongue*,
Wherein that snaky pine from Chili grows,
Which, like exotic that so freely blows
In its own clime, looks better there than here.
These are my very words. Your atmosphere
Is reeking with tobacco fumes. *No doubt*
My letter stank of smoke. And piled about,
Babel out-Babelled, books and papers, coat
And cane, untidest of men, I note ;
And in the woodwork of the mantel, four
—*Five*—oval miniatures and maybe more.
I must have told her that and she recalls,
Not knowing. As for moods in which one scrawls
Letters, they must be mixed in passing through
The post with others ; and your own, for you
Despatched on Saturday, has also lain
All Sunday in an office. I refrain
From posting then, because I can't abide
My letter's body more than mine, beside

The people's, when no need is ; who knows what
Dirt and disease is posted through a slot ?
Besides, I wish to keep my letter's soul
Fresh from my own inspiring, pure and whole,
That it may, liberated from the seal
And still unread, revive your heart and heal
Your spirit. *Please the Lord, my moods are lost
In passage through the post, with others tost.
Thank Heaven, my thoughts and feelings are my own,
And none can pick the lock and make them known.
Meddling with my emotions I resent ;
And those that would, though void of ill intent,
Peep through my keyholes, listen at my doors,
That is, divine my thoughts, are blasted bores.*

Anent the thoughts and feelings stamped on things,
What living dramas are rehearsed by rings !
—Heirlooms invaluable of ancient TRACE,
Which modern may confuse but not efface.
A ring for ever and for ever bears
The stamp indelible of him that wears,
Brightening or deadening diamonds and pearls
Proper to noble knights and guileless girls.
A rake's would kindle with its subtle fire
My veins were I not void of low desire ;
The soldier's with repeated blows and stabs
Of his most butcher-like profession blabs ;
The leech's and the Sister's heal the hurt
Which the sincere faith-healer's would avert ;
The Pope's has virtues which none other knows,
The stoic's fortitude, the saint's repose ;
The namby-pamby's has no tale to tell ;
But Belial's had he such would scorch like Hell.

Your own, a ruby surely, might reveal
What you could best disclose or best conceal.
Mine is a sapphire ring, which none before
My mother, saint and martyr, ever wore ;
What sovereign virtues in her ring reside
To soothe my sorrow and abate my pride
—*Which might be less and could not larger loom—*
Are lost in dazzling light, not blinding gloom.
I wear it as an amulet, a charm,
A talisman, to ward off every harm
From rabble rout, and woo the band benign
Of feelings, actions, thoughts and dreams divine.
More precious far than lover ever placed
Upon the darling finger which it graced ;
More potent than the one a monarch gave
To favoured noble whom it could not save ;
Or fateful emerald which Polycrates,
Not without reason, flung into the seas ;—
Is this my ring, wherefrom I will not part
To most accomplished in divining art.
And if before my death I do not find
—I have not found—in man or womankind
One pure enough to keep and not impair,
Or even complicate, its virtues rare,
By hopes less heavenly than my mother's, aims
More earthly, with my ashes from the flames,
This treasure shall be sealed, enshrined and urned.
I will, you know, my body to be burned,
Not buried. Yes, *of course, I might have guessed*
One of odd fads takes up with all the rest.

A wedding ring, which none has worn beside
The woman who has carried since a bride,

This golden link of leaden marriage chain
By day, by night, is easiest to explain.
But let me, ere I speak of this, affirm
That woman is the second, not the term,
Of human scale ascending ; man the first :
The third I could not tell you, if I durst.
And every pure man, when he breathes his last
Becomes a woman and of sexual caste.
*Oh, hang her "sexual caste" ! who cares a dump
If men are worse than women in the lump.*
Well, almost every wedding circlet shows
For wedlock, which a wife does not disclose,
Abhorrence—the preparatory stage
Of Heaven or even of a golden age,
In which we look to lead angelic lives,
Comrades and friends, not husbands, slaves and wives ;
As Christ in His divine evangel taught.
O ring of gold, for sorrow fused and wrought,
What woeful tales could you, could I, relate
That marriage, not the man I married, hate.
Four times a life in union have we tried
To live ; in vain, for more than seas divide
Man to his middle plunged in mud and mire
And woman purged in antenatal fire,
That yet his friend and fellow hopes to be
When they are spirits, happy, pure and free.
But before that our Nemesis on Earth
May change our injured sexes in rebirth,
This is my fear for some succeeding life,—
That I will be his husband, he my wife.

Of this, my worse than widowhood, you knew,
And now you know the reason, known to few.

*I guessed it long ago and I was right
Without a sense superfluous, second sight.
But never with a look or gesture, pray,
Remind me, by your beard, of what I say ;
Things that I cannot mend I do not rue :
I can forget my husband and I do ;
—Her sense of humour must be dormant while
Without intention she provokes a smile—
Because, although the poet's heart and mind
Fused into one attain the mark designed,
This is my, maybe scientific, trait,—
I cannot think and feel together ; nay,
Nor love two friends at once in breath the same ;
Hence jealousies arise, I not to blame ;
Hence every thought and passion kept apart,
I block my very dearest from my heart.*

TRACE is my science, not occult or dark ;
Trace is a common matter of remark.
Leaving a thought in some or other spot,
You go your way and then what you forgot
Recover when you pass the place again,
Which is a fact well known to thoughtful men.
Would saint or scholar visit Rome to view
Ancient and Mediæval swamped in New,
Where Tully would from noon till nightfall roam
Nor find his way lost from the Forum home ?—
Were Trace not treasured up in crumbling shrine,
Did not the Cæsars haunt the Palatine ?
What moves devotion in a grove and fane
But immemorial prayer which these retain ?
Wherefore we guard ourselves in hallowed aisles
Against the lighter feelings, looks and smiles

We should not dream of entertaining more
Than out of Naples spitting on the floor.

Yes, on the street—where not?—we should abstain
From thoughts impure, desponding, weak and vain,
Lest others put in practice what they find
Left by our own half-hearted selves behind.

*If this were true, what man of us would dare
To breathe lest he pollute the common air?
But were it true, the humblest might aspire
To help the race with purified desire.*

Cassandra brought before the palace gate
Of captor, like a bloodhound, scented straight
The gory deeds enacted there of old,
And felt his slaughter rather than foretold.

Even a coat or mantle brushing by
Makes our flesh creep, not without reason why.

We call at someone's house and are aware
Of genius in possession, cheer or care ;

We feel on entering room, as all agree,
The woman absent whom we came to see ;

We gaze on pictures and we master aim
Of painter, which the gold can never frame ;

We prize the clay wherein the sculptor thought
More than the marble journeymen have wrought ;

We rank the manuscript of bard and sage
Above the printed book and gilded page :

And if upon another's couch we sink

In slumber, with another's past we think

Another's thoughts, pursue another's schemes,

—*Embrace another's wife?*—and dream his dreams.

Not I. But sleep and trance are not my themes ;

Nor mine predictions, even if I say

That friends and letters are upon their way :

And yet far be it from me to deny
Gypsies and mystics know when they will die.
What if they kill themselves to justify,
When throwing up the cards? For if the soul,
In ecstasy be mingled with the Whole,
Awaking—as at birth—it may by chance
Remember what it knows in dream or trance ;
Pharaohs with visions in their sleep abound ;
It is the Joseph that is rarely found.
Telepathy's a fact and ghosts that flee
With night may visit others though not me :
The credence that I claim I can't but give ;
And I, with reservations as I live.

I know by heart the trite objections brought
Against the paid diviner's seeing aught.
What trace indeed could man expect to float
About the number of a five-pound note ?
But all have heard thought-reader more or less
Accomplished, with approximate success,
Holding the hand of one who knows it, name
The number ; were it far from right, the blame
Were rather his who knew than his who read :
I cannot keep five figures in my head,
Or form an image of them in my brain,
Which even Mrs Soames could ascertain.
As for Miss H.'s case, if I had crept
Into the bed where overnight she slept,
I might have learnt the secret of despair
And—with the *why*—the *how*, the *when* and *where*
In the live watches of the night revolved,
Which as a fact no fee'd clairvoyant solved.

But this I will uphold,—that in the place
She did the deed what nothing will efface
Hereafter lingers ; so that one who goes
Into the spot, unwitting of her woes,
Shall shudder in the hollow of the hurst
And swear the pit is haunted and accurst :
So pious Catholics esteeming earth
Carted from Palestine of especial worth,—
Or water bottled from a holy well,
Believe that Trace is indestructible,
Kissing perhaps that wonder-working hem
Touched in the press that thronged Jerusalem ;
—*Or was it Nazareth ? How can a stream
Treasure up Trace ? And pious Christians deem,
Though virtue may by relics be retained,
It reverent to leave mysteries unexplained.*
Virtue—which sacred annalist ascribes
To parted concubine that roused the tribes,
To buried prophet that revived the dead—
Resides, by all the blood the martyrs shed,
In mortal flesh ; by Trace immortalised
In pictures to be seen and not surmised
By second sight,—yes, from the very womb
Imprinted till, and even in, the tomb.
Turn as you may the mourner's eyes above,
Out of its graves you will not argue love.
“ Even in our ashes live their wonted fires ”
Poetry answers Science that inquires ;
And if to all the winds you scatter mine
I will not on my future plane repine.

Because of Trace our living bodies strike
Beholders with “ irrational ” dislike

Or liking. Frankly, you and others show
More than you wish me or I wish to know.
In vain you fight your foes upon the field
Behind a chased and graphic fleshly shield ;
And interpose your body like a screen ;
The screen is painted : all that you have been,
Suffered, desired and done is felt and seen.
The “felt” you pass,—you feel ; the “seen” deny,—
You see not what was seen in days gone by,
When the belated hind beheld at night
The flash of phantom spears in phantom fight,
And heard the thud of phantom armies on
The memorable plain of Marathon.
His was clairvoyance and clairvoyance ; clear
My inner eyes are not but dim and blear,
Yet sharp enough for me to swear to Trace,
That gives me back again my mother’s face
Imprinted on her ring, with many a scene
Wherein she moved and dignified routine ;—
But clear enough to see with “sensitives”
The light, which every living creature gives
Out in the rays that shot like silk confuse
The nicest in detecting rays and hues
—The crimsons of the passionate and fierce
That pulsed with smoke and splendour blind and
 pierce ;
The sapphire of the chaste, our Lady’s own ;
The emerald of the innocent alone ;
The amber flame in aureole wrapt about
The head, the hands, the feet, the knees devout ;
The neutral tints that God and Devil share ;
The dun of earth-born beings that despair.
And every man has all of these by turns,

As downward he declines or upward yearns,
Though clearly none but God Himself discerns.

My lustrous body too, the forge of Trace
Whate'er it be, that nothing can erase,
The register of all my conflicts past,
The witness to my triumph won at last,
Immortal as the spirit, I respect
In every gesture seemly, not neglect
Nor mortify. The famished talk and think
And dream of little else than food and drink ;
I eat and I forget on what I dine,
But have not fed on flesh nor tasted wine :
Therefore, my head is clear, my heart is glad
And glowing with the feeling I can add
In union with the Eternal, who inspires
High thoughts, heroic deeds and pure desires,
Mine to impressions fair and swell their sum
Succouring him who knows not whence they come,
For whom the issue seems uncertain still
In the fierce fight waged between good and ill ;
So nuns assist the world with prayer and praise.
The canvas fades, the marble man decays,
The poem dies, and ancient annals pass
Though penned with iron on a page of brass ;
Lost are our infant looks, our childhood's face
Cherubic, manhood's port and girlhood's grace,
Our many bodies mingle with the dead,
But all arise again, as creeds have said,
For all abide in Trace—to men how faint,
To God how clear !—the Book that banished saint
Beheld, and open still,—the Book of Doom
Recording from the cradle to the tomb

The life of man by man himself portrayed,
Which none may hope to cancel or evade ;
No dread of torment, no desire of bliss,
Can give a greater motive than is this
Deterrent or inspiring thought to smite
Us with dismay, to thrill us with delight.

I left your questions till the last, and I
To one, and only one, of these reply.
Successive shocks—one physical, a fall ;
Some psychical, my marriage most of all ;
Made me what you, not I, clairvoyant call.
But who I was in my prenatal state ;
Wherefore reborn ; what is the normal rate
Of my vibrations ; which may be the note
—High, you suspect,—in music ; can I quote
The number or the numbers that God knows
Me by ; my colour,—is it amber, rose
Or purple—"purple" ! man, because you jest
And call me arrogant, torture shall not wrest
The answers, though I know them, from my breast.
What would you think me did I tell you these ?
A psychical detective, if you please,
Continue still to call yours, in farewell,
Cassandra, *plus* my maiden name, Dalziel.

*Well named is she that, be what will achieved,
Was not, is not, and will not be believed.*

THE PAST

And of the Past are all that cannot pass away.

From SHELLEY'S *Adonais*.

THOUGH absent you were present yesternight
And by no fault of mine for I was dreaming,
And but a moment yielded to delight
Only in seeming.

How often have I hungered for a kiss
The millionth of the million that you lavish
On little children, which they would not miss
And me would ravish.

How often I remember old caresses,
Words breathed not uttered, ecstasies departed,
Then of His grace God sends the dream that blesses
The broken-hearted.

Then I relive that far-off summer rife
With love ; for all our being once, once only,
Flowers into love, and that we call our life
After is lonely.

Think not that I repent of raptures past
Because of all the loss and pain resultant ;
Not so ; my heart at having held thee fast
Beats still exultant.

Whether we will or not, for me, for you,
What has been is, although our faith may falter ;
Omnipotence Himself cannot undo
The Past, nor alter.

In fiat that went forth ere we were fashioned
Our past was comprehended in our present,
And vain the fond conceit that aught impassioned
Is evanescent.

The man that trusts in fugitive relations
Shall find in league against his fond reliance
The world that dares him with associations
Flashing defiance.

Of murder done in some forgotten age
Seen in the shadow of the traitor stabbing,
Of leman's perjured oaths and lover's rage,
Some star is blabbing.

The Volume of Remembrance is the Mind
Of God, who cannot gloss the text or garble ;
And unto His the memories of mankind
Are wax to marble.

The Universe defies us to forget,
Fain though we be to cross decree supernal ;
Be it recalled with pleasure or regret,
All is eternal,

THE DAY THAT SHE WAS BORN, ETC.

“Beware of anniversaries.”

THE day that she was born
Returning flushes all the hills with light,
And fires the rosy roof above the corn
That hides her from my sight.

Not in this body beats
My burning heart, but yonder where she dwells;
Thither my mournful consciousness retreats
Defiant of farewells.

This was the day of days,
The day that heard our mutual love avowed,
With passionate caresses and the praise
That makes no woman proud.

This was the sweet excuse
For prayer, in which the full soul overflows;
And yet the happiest heart and least obtuse
Is happier than it knows.

I brought her lilies, lo,
Lilies! for these unfolded at her birth,
While yellow fields with poppies all aglow
Illumined Heaven and Earth.

Fresh from the mint like gold
 New rhymes I gave, not of my fitful fires ;
 Bliss is a mute, nor will her eyes behold
 The strains that she inspires.

We strayed upon the Chase,—
 We did not stray ; we roamed,—we did not roam ;
 Nor could return at eve, for every place
 That held us both was home.

But now I dare not send
 Letter and flower memorial of the day,
 Nor phrase of salutation as a friend
 Or chance acquaintance may.

Now with their tale complete
 The lilies gleam inviolate in the sun ;
 It might as well be winter, and the sweet
 Flowers faded,—every one.

Though now she may dismiss
 For love of newly-liberated might,
 Our past in common like a bastard bliss
 That yields to later right,

She cannot think,—she dare
 Not in her self most alien say,
 Because no greeting, book or flower I bear,
 That I forget the day.

Yet if Disease should cross
 Out all my past and score from heart and brain
 Memories sweet and bitter, would the loss
 Be greater than the gain ?

I grudge to fruitless grief
The mellow light of these entrancing skies,
These days divine, for one whose love is brief
And in displeasure dies.

Shall I, whose singing time
Is summer, waste away in barren tears,
The golden hours,—I that may be sublime
And have not many years ?

But for these days—alas !—
Reviving grief, remembrance and regret,—
But for these days returning, life might pass,
Though gray, serenely yet.

Well, well, the day will wear
And waste itself away, like life at last,
And with its close I have my sorry share
In *festa*—it is past.

GO

Chi vuol fuggir, Rinaldo fuggir lassa.—ARIOSTO.

WARRING, war ; and wooing
Woo ;
Do not talk of doing ;
Do.

Heart is in the winning
Won,
Deed in the beginning
Done.

Wind for wanderer blowing,
Blow !
Let the bent on going
Go.

When the mood impelled him
On
While he spoke I held him
Gone.

KISSING THROUGH A VEIL

How light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love.—T. MOORE.

A LADY'S dress is not, I confess,
Matter for man to assail, O,
But what, the deuce ! is the earthly
use
Of what they call a veil, O,
Of what they call a veil ?

An ugly face like a blot erase,
And not a soul will wail, O ;
But beauty bright in the evening light
Why palliate with a veil, O,
Why palliate with a veil ?

But not for aught had I said my thought,
I did not wish to rail, O ;
When by the gate I parted from Kate,
Who kissed me through her veil, O,
Who kissed me through her veil.

The weaker sex with impunity vex ;
But had it been a male, O,
He had earned a kick for such a trick
As kissing through a veil, O,
As kissing through a veil.

Madam or Miss, I put to you this,
Which answer without fail, O,
What virtue resides in even brides'
Kisses behind a veil, O,
Kisses behind a veil ?

But as for this particular Miss
Of whom I tell my tale, O,
I may be nice, but she didn't twice
Kiss me behind a veil, O,
Kiss me behind a veil.

My traps I packed, and got myself sacked,
And then and there set sail, O ;
And now I see to be quit of me
She kissed me through a veil, O,
She kissed me through a veil.

SELF IN COMMAND

Si l'on n'est pas maître de ses sentiments, au moins on l'est de sa conduite.—J. J. ROUSSEAU.

I N vernal air and vista fair
I strayed with Fanchon Lee,
Who seemed at least to like my beast,
And, which is stranger, me ;
She loved, she said, and stroked his head,
That nestled at her knees,
A dog that could, a dog that would,
Despatch a man with ease ;
I knew him well, how fierce and fell
In war and chase was he,
Though thus without a fear or doubt
He gambolled glad and free

A dog, they say, will have his day,
And one at once with Fan ;
The summer brought an afterthought
In second dog and man.
She praised the cur, for some prefer
A beast of doubtful breed ;
And mine was sore and jealous swore
The rival brute should bleed ;
I saw him show a serried row
Shining and sharp as steel,
And thought it right, forecasting fight,
To keep my hound to heel.

I oscillate 'twixt love and hate,
And till I hit the mean
I fear to rove in park or grove
Where Fanchon may be seen ;
And did I take my dog, the rake
In love and war alert,
Were on her tracks did I relax
My guard against a skirt :
And if he found upon his ground
The second dog and man,
Who could engage to quell his rage ?
My hound is under ban.

I am above my hate and love,
Above my joy and pain ;
These have their term—so men affirm—
But I, but *I*, remain.
And thus, although right well I know
The price of love is peace,
I hold my hound of passion bound
And kennelled past release :
He pulls his chain with might and main
At passage of a gown ;
Struggle he may, but shall obey,
Dog of a heart, lie down !

A FELON

[*Letters, and the Felon's asides in italics.*]

Froude says that after the Spanish Armada, Sir Francis Drake was held in great horror and hatred by the enemy. A Spaniard one day seeing a fellow-countryman passing said: "Would I not kill you if you were Sir Francis!" He raised his gun as he spoke and, as it were, in spite of him, fired and his countryman lay dead at his feet.

DEAR sir, my friend and—more—my father's friend,

I write, what after all I may not send,
A letter from my cell in Bodmin Gaol,
Your worship, Brutus-like, refusing bail,
Committing me to trial. Yes, yes, I know
How much it cost you, staggering from a blow,
To exercise your office; for, you see,
I looked at you that could not look at me;
And when I saw your head and shoulders bowed,
Your hands unstrung, your face with sorrow ploughed,
Felon, I had not cared to change my place
Before the bar with you that tried my case,—
The justice on the bench. I did, I do,
Feel for myself less pity than for you.

Dear guardian of my youth—too far away
To measure; it is years since yesterday—
Are you concluding all the care I cost
You cast upon ungrateful soil and lost,

My foes with prescient instincts verified,
My lovers in the wrong, my friends belied ?
But oh ! believe not, blinded by your tears,
That hopes are prophets falser far than fears,
That any point in life exceeds the whole,
That any single act can damn the soul,
Even the closing. Beggar not the Past
With what has happened since ; for, sir, the last
Act of our life is not so final. Quote
Against me every sage that ever wrote,
I care not ; let the steps you guided be
Picked but to cease with, say, the gallows tree,
Your labour was not lost. The path we trod
Will lead us *via* Devil and Hell to God.

Love what I was, for I was what I seemed ;
Not wholly worthless is the once-esteemed.
Deceive I did not ; what you knew, you knew,
Though latent was the more than met your view,
Or even mine, discovered in a breath ;
Wherefore, call no one good before his death.
But boy, but man, I was not reprobate ;
The thought of my dead father kept me straight :
And what I was I am. I was not more
Wicked the moment after than before
My deed of blood, but less. The wrath we house
Rages the most ; for sin, which God allows,
Sin has its uses or would not exist ;
What is Sin for ?—but to be conquered is't,
To make men strong ? Does it not liberate
In action, which is better than a state,
The diabolic passions, lust and hate,
Known in their scorching track through fields defaced,

The orchard ravished and the pleasance waste,
Proving the world established for the chaste
And God for the beneficent. I tell
You that for men and angels who rebel
The pilgrim road to Heaven may pass through Hell.
There are two actions, sir, and only two,
Kind and unkind, which love and hatred do ;
And love is always in the right and hate
Is always in the wrong. So let him prate
Who crams us with a psalm's exploded stuff,
And love me still. If I am good enough
For God to love, I am good enough for you,
Possible felons all. No witness true
To His external favour is withdrawn ;
His light in rainbow-coloured bars at dawn
Quivers, or plays in wavelets as it falls
On the cold plaster of my prison walls ;
And through my window's adamantine bars
The night-blue vault of heaven is pricked with stars.

Did I say "love me" ?—rather love me not
If care for me should cloud your future lot ;
Better that your affection for me cease
Than it be purchased at the price of peace.
Well is it she for whom I did the deed
Of violence that made my rival bleed,
Did not return my love. Now am I glad
That what I thought a good I never had,—
A brother to feel branded by my shame ;
A sister who would love me still the same,
Her woman's future for my sake forlorn ;
Thank God my mother died when I was born !
My very birth bereaved him of his wife,
For the first time I wish him not in life,—

My father, since beside his open grave
I stood in boyhood, the chief mourner brave,
Feeling on this unfathered planet none
Would ever care for me as he had done ;
Nay, still he lives and still he loves his son.

Pity me not for these privations ere
My sentence which my flesh and blood may bear,
For even pain of body's a relief
If it divert the mind of man from grief
And anguish, when the day is long as night,
The night as long as day. What wretched plight,
What punishment imposed, what penal pain,
Equals the sense of guilt, the curse of Cain
By the Lord God forbidden to be slain.
But is this Abel dead indeed, then I,
Hanged by result, in human justice die ;
Nor dare I, with remorse ahead, survive
My victim. But this Abel is alive
Doubtless ; for were he dead I should at most
See, or at least should hear, his hostile ghost ;
Should I ? for would he haunt me ? If he lives
Or dies, a Christian live or dead forgives ;
And he should rather bless me than upbraid,
Who by the blunder of a crime have made
Utterly his the kindest heart, and oh !
The sweetest disposition, that will go
With those twin orbs of blue, that light bestow,
After the hindmost in the hunt, the one
Most beaten in the fight, the most undone ;
Of suitors she will choose him ill-bestead
And saddened for her sake, dismissed or dead
Her ruling passion is pity. Why, the deuce,
Didn't I know it while it was of use ?

But now my time is up, my knowledge late
Avails me not if there's no future state.

But why compare myself with Cain ? Compete
In crime I cannot even with the sweet
Singer that robbed the Hittite of his wife
And then this injured husband of his life,
Libidiously, basely. And to call
Myself the chief of sinners with Saint Paul,
Were cant for me, that can remember few
Less villainous felons. The first murderer slew
His brother not to blame, when none was by,
And out of envy—spawn of Hatred—I
My rival, in the light of day, before
Three witnesses, as two—not Agnes—swore ;
And I was dogged by jealousy that clings
Shadow-like close to love, from which it springs,
And if your heaven is hardly worth your hell,
O jealous lover, bid your bliss farewell.
But love, so stubborn are our stupid hearts,
Comes not at call, nor at our will departs,
Outlingering all the guests, outfacing time,
Surviving the estranging sense of crime :
For here I take upon myself my deed,
Nor madness in extenuation plead ;
Rather than pass my days with those that rave,
I serve my dozen years or dig my grave
With suicidal craft ; or, not to rob
The hangman of his ready money job,
Swing like a stoat to scare the vermin mob.

Yes, if my victim dies, the Planet Earth,
The most to blame because she gave me birth,

Will pick me up and drop me over the pale
Into her neighbour's garden, like a snail ;
If Mars decline to be a Botany Bay
And will import no convicts, Venus may
Receive them in her sphere, the third of joy,
Like our long winter evenings at Lanoy,
Before and after Agnes had come back
From Paris to keep house for " Uncle Jack."
How with approaching night the moorland glowed
Or deepened into darkness while I strode
From Hall across our fields to your abode,
Lit as you love it with the double light
Of lamp and fire that streamed into the night
A highway to the stars. If from within
Her song, or live and lovely violin,
Made the light audible, I paused and stayed
Listening before I entered, while she played
Or sang as lightly, easily, as a bird ;
A sweeter voice than hers I never heard ;
Music it was whether she sang or spoke :
I used to listen for her laugh, and woke
It often, of set purpose, with a joke,
So-so perhaps ; the merriment was the best
Part of the freshest pun or wittiest jest :
It will be long before she laughs again,
And I shall not be there to hear her then.

Perhaps she read aloud to you, or plied
Her needles with deft fingers by your side,
And I sat listening to her lightest word
With eyes and ears. I loved to be a third
If you were in the trio, since of you
I was not jealous, for I loved you too.

But what we both were full of we forbore
To speak of,—some fine spin some hours before,
Because she hated hunting in her heart,
Shrank from details and took the fox's part.
At times I made a fourth at Bridge or Whist
But liked not being her antagonist,
Because not relishing to hear her name
Another "partner" even in a game ;
And how when I was hers with throbs and thumps
Could I be sure if hearts or clubs were trumps ?—
Confronted with her clever brows, the fair
And soft abundance of her dazzling hair,
The splendours of her large and lustrous eyes
Of blue beholden to the sea's and sky's,
Her dimpled, mobile, most expressive chin,
Which none could watch and ignorantly sin ;
The poem of her dainty hands—whereon
A single jewel, just a sapphire, shone ;
Her dress I never could describe, but saw
In every item 'twas without a flaw.
Say not that ladies' looks are overprized ;
The body is the soul externalised :
Say not the cult of clothes deserves a frown ;
Dress is the body's body : dear the gown
Of silk or serge in which my love is drest,
Warm with her heart and heaving with her breast ;
And dearest, most herself, of all my love's
Apparel, are her dainty, darling gloves.

At times the four at cards were swelled to eight
Or twice that number, for your Pagan gate
Was wide to all the world, to me the most ;
I never came too often for my host ;

And Agnes was so social, I believed
That others were as well as I received ;
Thus jealousy, that first self-consciousness
For love, revealed my heart to her no less
Than to myself. Thereafter she became
Uncertain save in being not the same ;
A woman varies in Virgilian phrase,
And Agnes loved upon alternate days :
Sunday, she liked me ; Monday, liked me not ;
Tuesday, a little ; Wednesday, not a jot :
And so forth, like an ague's, through the week
Was her behaviour. Was it due to freak ?
Could she be fickle ? for the constant man,
Who loved his love before the world began,
Not only every year and every day,
But every moment of it loves her. Nay,
Such constant changes of the Moon declare
Her constant. What if she might wish to spare
A friend the bitter, mortifying " No "
—That flirts inflict and coxcombs undergo—
Slighting my suit betimes, but soon relent
To me, the victim of the last event,
Despairing, and—to cheer me—change her cue,
Seeing that Agnes is as kind as true.
But I believed she liked me less or more
As I herself might more or less adore,
For they that know themselves, or dream they
know,
Standing in their own estimation low,
Think little of a man, perhaps contemn
And pity him that thinks too much of them.
Thus I explained her moods as many, sure,
As those of western weather, sea and moor.

Last summer Zara Montès came to share
Your home with you and Agnes ; and the pair,
Though cousins in one house, became beyond
All precedent extravagantly fond.
Agnes was never to be had without
Her cousin, up and down and in and out ;
We saw them all around the garden walk
Together, Agnes listen, Zara talk,
Holding each other's hands. I felt *de trop*
With her I loved, alas ! and had to go.
But once, to separate the pair, I drew
Zara, not Agnes, up our tor to view
The sunset and the sea. When we had both
Descended to your dwelling, nothing loth,
Agnes was waiting at the door and there,
With a divine caress, recaptured Zare,
As if her own proprietary rights
Were challenged by myself, the least of knights,
Or rather squires, ignored. And seeing she
Was jealous not of Zara but of me,
Which she preferred was proved beyond debate.
A woman's love for womankind is great ;
And I was jealous of a girl, a gown,
A bright brunette that blushed a deeper brown,
Intense and dark as I, that do not care
For black Madonnas, but admire a fair
Woman not come of my pre-Celtic stock,
Whose colour is the felon's in the dock ;
Did not a judge, who must be right, remark,
Save one in twenty criminals are dark.

I wished that Zare would fall in love and make
Agnes bethink herself what sort of stake

In happiness is hers that may depend
Upon the presence of a female friend ;
For the best woman is obliged to yield
Before the meanest manikin in the field.
And when in March we got a curate " high "
Church and not else, I had my hopes of Bligh,
Who had one requisite—the lack of brains,
To make him worth a tender woman's pains.
If holding that the husband is the head
—How not ?—of any woman he may wed
—I would not speak amiss of him if dead—
He'd find it more than hard to meet a mate
Small as himself, Mrs Tom Thumb in pate ;
A parson or a man that sings and plays
Rarely excels our sex in other ways.
His " goodness " was the last resort of praise ;
But would an artist in his senses paint
A plump Messiah or a chubby saint ?
And Bligh was fat and fair, the filial blond
Of whom ambitious parents must despond,
For far he will not go, since men of mark
In Church and State are criminally dark.
Cæsar and Christ were fair ?—who knows ? The scouts
Of annals are the men that have their doubts.
But where was I ?—this getting off the track
Beguiles my prison day, but hark we back,
Back to my sheep, my Bligh. He had a trick
Of smiling to himself, which made me sick,
And—worse—of looking down his foolish face
When stumped for words, his not uncommon case,
Looking for that which was no longer there,
The ghost of some moustache he used to wear.
He was a preacher, sir, and could not preach,
But could intone our Common Prayer and reach

An anthem's highest notes, within an ace ;
He missed the top. I boast a manly bass,
And I can go as deep as Agnes high.
This music—damn it !—was a mutual tie
Between her and the Reverend Bernard Bligh ;
And often when I came at night, I found
This interloper on Tom Tiddler's ground ;
She fiddled, he piano'd. Zara sat
Sewing, and my male duty was to chat
With her, who shone in conversation ; all
Proficient, she would fling back every ball :
For I could give the bright brunette her due,
Now jealous mists no longer hid the view
At least of her. What made my spirit sore
Was to see Bligh, the rosy curate, score
More runs than I had scored in years before.
The softer sex too gladly suffers fools,
That look most foolish stuck on music stools :
Besides, a woman is a kind of moth
That makes for altar candles and the cloth ;
A girl the most devout will most incline
To think a surpliced priest is half divine ;
Her, were she man, a bishop should ordain ;
But, being woman and as such profane,
Although a priest in petticoats is quite
A common object and a comely sight,
She may not be a parson, lead his life,
She'll be the next best thing, a parson's wife.

Well, August came ; our curate took a rest
From doing nothing somewhere farther west ;
Our moors were gorse and heather ; many a guest
Came to the Paradise of guests, Lanoy ;
And followed in our lead across the Fowey

Over to Dozmare's haunted pool that hides
High in the lonely hills ; and up the sides
Sharp of the frowning fort of rocks, Kilmar,
Fronting the monarch of the moorland, far
Removed in purple splendour. Heart and mind,
Agnes was all prevision and refined
Attention. At the board one's every need
She noticed and supplied, and mine indeed
When I was present. More than time and space
A crowd divides ; but when I came, her face
Intent on croquet, Agnes was aware
From other power than sight that I was there,
Although the stroke of mallet drowned my tread :
This was from first to last my lonely shred
Of consolation. These were happy days,
My last of hope, for Hope has gone her ways
And Future none is mine. I love to dwell
Upon them in my solitary cell ;
Thus Heaven appears, if Heaven be seen, from Hell.

With August went the guests ; our curate came
Back from the coast, the same and not the same ;
Above his lip, too short for that, he wore
What made him look less manly than before,—
A small moustache that curled. With one consent
Ladies pronounced it not an ornament ;
And at Lanoy one evening when he turned
And faced us from his music stool, he learned
What all had longed to tell him from the girls
Declaring what they called his “ comma curls ”
Did not become him ; and the more they teased
The better was our pretty curate pleased,
And the more wroth was I, that they should care
About his comma more or less of hair ;

And Agnes was for all her banter grave ;
And something hung on how he might behave,—
This :—Did he like her well enough to shave ?
And not for nothing is another's thought ;
Impressions do not go with me for nought ;
And all that evening I behaved as ill
As none but lovers dare behave or will,
With bitter speech that jealous thought supplied,
By which my better self would not abide,
Less fitted to conciliate love, in fine,
Than lose what liking was already mine.
But then the jealous no more reason may
Than victim shaken by the beast of prey,
Or epileptic in his fit, possess ;
And such a beast, a demon in the breast
Of men is jealousy, that foams and tears
And slays, and palms off his misdeeds as theirs.
Such a beast's victim, such a devil's thrall,
Was I, that paced alone my dreary Hall
At midnight wisht and wild. The wind and rain
Gave their hard blows against the window pane,
My blood was running riot in my brain.
I hated the supplanting fool and worse,
And dealt him in the furious night a curse
That very Hell would shudder to rehearse.
Wicked are those that are not loved ; and I
Killed when I cursed my miserable Bligh.

Fair was the morning and I sallied out
Armed with my gun. The wish to kill no doubt
Worked in my breast. Unerring was my aim ;
By noon my bag was filled with gruesome game :
And then of use and wont I brought my spoils
Back to Lanoy, not witting of the toils

Prepared for all unwary feet by Fate.
No sooner had I shut the garden gate
Than I perceived along the gravel walk
Agnes beside the curate, deep in talk.
Confused he saw me, then looked down his face
For that which was not there, except in trace ;
The small moustache was gone. Ill could I brook
His half-ashamed and her triumphant look,
And even as I spoke my choler rose
With taunting, Did his manliness propose
To please and humour women all his life ?
—Not to please women but his future wife,
He said. Thereat my fury broke all bound,
I raised my gun to level to the ground,
Like vermin, the supplanter. It is writ,
The weapon draws the wielder after it ;
I read it while at Wellington. He fell
Defenceless on the grass insensible ;
My hate was dead. What next was to be done
Was hindered ; Agnes hurled the captured gun
Over the garden fence, beyond the road,
Into the brake. I heard the brute explode.
Others were on the lawn. My feet and not
My brain conveyed me from the cursed spot,
Across the moor, that ran with blood and flame ;
I knew not where I went or whence I came,
Till I, my progress unopposed, unbarred,
Gave myself up to justice at Liskeard.
Well, well, albeit jealous love is lust,
It seems as if an ousted suitor must
Be jealous and abhor ; and he that hates
His brother is a murderer. Many mates
In crime have I, that in my cell abide
The sentence which is due to homicide.

*Click ! and the key within the lock flies back.
It is a letter and from " Uncle Jack."*

"DEAR DENYS, Agnes asks me to despatch
Her letter, leaving barely time to catch
This morning's mail ; but her epistle bears
Upon the present posture of affairs
And needs no supplement. Our course, I hear,
With the extraction of the shot is clear.
Your name, through many generations known,
Honoured and loved in Cornwall, and your own
Unblemished reputation in the past,
Before this barbarous deed, the first—the last,
Which no one can deplore so much as you,
Will serve us. We are doing and shall do
All lying in our power to pull you through
Your lamentable plight. In haste, I close
Yours most affectionately, J. TREVOSE."

*Old fellow, you're a brick ! And so the shot
Has been extracted. How the patient, what
The issue, in your haste to catch the post
You tell not him whom it concerns the most.
The letter is from Agnes. What portend
To me two sheets and filled from end to end ?—
What but reproaches and her last farewell,—
That is, her last fareill. But if she tell
Me my successful rival may survive,
I can bear all, arrive what will arrive ;
Whatever future anguish is in store,
It cannot equal what has gone before.
Yes, I will read her letter, which begins
" Denys," the " dear " omitted for my sins.*

“ I have delayed to write until I could
Give you, not fearing to recall it, good
News, which will ease your mind and make you
glad

Far more than aught beside that I shall add,—
Oh, such good news ! The doctors have declared
The patient’s life—and so your own—is spared.
Soon he will be himself again, for he
Is making such a good recovery.

For happy tears I cannot see to write ;
I laugh and weep at once from sheer delight.
How strangely grief and joy can mate and nest
Together, at one moment, in one breast !

“ What we have suffered for you both, I need
Not—need I ?—tell you, since the ghastly deed,—
For which I feel at fault and gladly take
My share of blame ; you did it for my sake,
Not knowing what you did. And had I been
More simple in the past, you would have seen
What some men see too soon, although the *how*,
The *much* of love I never knew till now ;
It takes an earth-upheaving shock to show
One made like me the fire that burns below.
Besides, I thought I was within my right
To treat a suitor, even you, to slight,
Rigour and cruelty, that hurt the heart
Sensitive more than any bodily smart ;
Because a man—ah, would I had not known !—
Too certain of a woman’s love is prone
To underrate the prize and doubt his own.
But since two blacks will never make a white,
Unkindness in no circumstance is right,

Though to a favoured lover, whom to test
Is to distrust. • So here I stand confest
—For I have been unkind at seasons—wrong.
And yet a woman should deliberate long
And test herself, when of herself not sure,
If love, her love, be stuff that will endure.
Yes, in the man's behalf, she will debate
Before surrender to her lifelong mate.
If I exceeded my prerogative,
Then this excess and every slight, forgive.

“But all the same, there was no reason why
You should have been so wroth with Bernard
Bligh ;

He shaved off his minute moustache to please
Zara, not me. But every lover sees
In every man a rival that aspires
To wear the weed which he himself admires ;
And then his love is his sufficient plea
For that most cruel passion, jealousy.
I hope, myself, I love too much to be
Jealous, but might have been so, I confess,
At times of Zara had I loved her less,
Especially that evening when you took
Her up Penilly Tor by Walla Brook.
Surely we should not feel if we loved all
Jealous of one, though *for* him ; and to call
God jealous, in our meaning of the word,
Is atheistic, blasphemous and absurd.
A mother is not jealous of her child,
Nor friend of friend, nor God—if truly styled
The Father—of mankind. And—strange to say—
These lines are in my Calendar to-day :

Look to it, Love ; one of two things must be,
Thou shalt crush jealousy or it will thee.

“ Soon as a witness—do not hate me, dear,
That brought you to this pass—I must appear
In court against you,—tell the truth ; to tell
The whole will be, was, is impossible.
And which will suffer keenlier of the two,
You, man, for me, or, woman, I, for you,
Only God knows. How gladly would I glide
Into the dock and stand there by your side,
With you in your worst deed identified !
Hereafter, I shall be so one with you
That I shall seem to do the thing you do,
Be what it will ; and shall not only *seem*,
For I shall think your thought and dream your dream ;
Remember this. Whatever penal pain
The court award, you’ll manfully sustain
And cheerfully abide. It will be hard,
Harder for you than most, to be debarred
The freedom of our moors, and share the scorn
And shame of burglars, villains, felons born,
The victims of hereditary wrong,
And to be pitied surely. They belong
To us, deducting from our good. The Whole
Is implicated in the single soul.

“ But there’s a terminus to human woes ;
Your penal pain, or long or short, will close ;
And then, as soon as ever you are free,
Dear Denys, I will be your wife ; and we
Together from its lonely act of shame
Here will redeem a not unhonoured name ;

Or, if you think we cannot in this place
 By deeds of kindness cover old disgrace,
 Men's memories are so good, then let or sell
 Your land and Tudor Hall, and we will dwell
 Elsewhere in Britain, or abroad, I care
 But little, so we be together, where.
 Yet while 'tis my belief, although you chafe,
 You of all men from deeds of blood are safe,
 I am your wife on one condition, one,
 This : that you never shoulder more a gun.
 I cannot think how men can kill for fun
 The darling birds, or harry out of breath
 The gentlest of God's beasts, a hare, to death ;
 The next thing is to shoot or persecute
 Man, that can be the most obnoxious brute.
 Indeed it is a marvel to my mind
 A sportsman does not often kill his kind.

" My heart is fuller than my heart can hold ;
 Love never was and never will be told ;
 The heart must vent itself in deeds or break.
 I will be good, if only for your sake.
 We will be good, whatever is our lot,
 Good for each other, Denys, will we not,
 Through Him that died to save us. Night and day
 Darling, for you in His dear name I pray
 To One that hears our prayers. Pray too for me,
 Yours, Agnes." . . . *I for her . . . my wife to be !*

*Hell is the loser, then, and Heaven the winner.
 O God, be merciful to me a sinner !*

AUTUMN MIST ON DARTMOOR

I love all waste
And solitary places ; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be.

SHELLEY.

O PURPLE Moorland, golden waste
Of flowers that fire and flood the mount
From which the Dart and Webburn haste
To mingle with their ocean fount,

Is there no record in your sod
Of pilgrim steps imprinting mark
Memorial of the path we trod
From verge to verge, from dawn till dark ?

Again we leave the town and thread
Devon's interminable bowers
Of oak and hazel overhead,—
The lanes deep-sunk in ferns and flowers.

We gain the common, where the brakes
Are burning green and gold, we cross
The stream that where it wanders makes
A second sunlight of the moss.

We climb the grass of slope ablaze
With flowers ; and from its fringe behold
The moor that to horizon's haze
Is purple intergrown with gold.

The moorland swells without a sound
In wider waves that break at height,
Not liquid seas, nor solid ground,
But only colour, shade and light.

How fleeting shine and shadow chase
Each other as on ivory floor,
How cloud on cloud sweeps over face
Of Earth and variegates the moor !

How nearer height of gorse and heath
That glowed with ruddy hues but now,
Deepens and darkens underneath
The gloom that settles on its brow !

And see ! the sun is veiled in clouds,
The heights above are capped, and soon
The mist swoops down the tors and shrouds
Us each from each with night at noon.

It falls and lifts, it falls and lifts ;
And on us faring forwards, loom
Ridges of rocks between the rifts
Of rolling cloud and mist and gloom.

Jagged and huge and dark and wild,
Fresh tors behind the others rise,
Like frowning forts and bastions piled
By giants warring with the skies.

And round these fortresses of rocks
Boulders of adamant are hurled,—
Chaotic, elemental blocks,
The weapons of an earlier world.

Thus in the skies that half display
Chasms that sink and peaks that soar,
We follow now the lead of day
And now the torrent's guiding roar.

Then at the gorge the highlands sink
Sheer into cliffs that flank abyss,
And we are standing on the brink,
Gazing adown the precipice.

The mists roll up the deep ravine
Cloven for headway by the Dart ;
Cliffs that confront us hid or seen
As clouds alternate close or part.

While hills like clouds and clouds like hills,
Spectral appear and disappear,
The heart of the beholder fills
With awe that is akin to fear.

Since then we have seen full many a time
The moor in light of amethyst,
But never seen it so sublime
As when its hills are rolled in mist.

For nothing can enthrall the mind
For ever save the unexplored
And unexplained ; the half divined
Alone is utterly adored.

The height, the depth, is half undone
The moment that we fathom it ;
There is no God or there is One
Unseen, unknown and infinite.

.

Well, every spot on which we stand,
And pilgrimage on which we wend
Together, is a Holy Land
Sacred to thee, beloved friend.

COCKCROW

Wel sikerer, was his crowing in his loge
Than is a clok or any abbey orloge.—CHAUCER.

WE crossed the Channel late at night
And reached the haven ere the light,
And on the harbour platform stayed
Sleepily for our train delayed.
The hour was dark, the season chill,
The station at the moment still,
When close beside us in a crate,
Seen like a felon through a grate,
A cock from such a brazen throat
Crowed with so loud and shrill a note,
The very air was all astir
With *cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur* !

Cœur, courage in old French, he cried,
And cocks four furlongs off replied.
Our fowl from France that stoutly crows
Is understood where'er he goes,
Unlike mankind for trouble planned,
That change their language with their land.
“And oh,” thought I, “what cheer and pluck
Is yours in this the worst of luck,
O scion of a dauntless race,
Invincible in evil case,
That thus your noble breed aver.
In *cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur*.

“Go where you will, I hope you’ll find
As meek as those you leave behind
The many dames you think your due,
Hankering ever after new ;
And who would grudge you that are worth,
Fine fellow ! all the hens on earth.
One wife’s enough as women be ;
And how your Partlets all agree,
And how you keep your eight in hand
Is more than Christians understand ;
Yours is the secret, gallant sir,
So *cœur cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur*.

“Methinks I see you marching out
Your ladies like a champion stout,
And when you scratch up grain or grit
Clucking a dame to bolt the tit-
Bit of great love that would appal
One lonely hen to hold it all ;
In this unselfish grace you can
Compare too well with greedy Man.
Then hearing far-off cock that sings
Salute, you flap your lusty wings
And rise upon your doughty spurs
With *cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur-cœurs*.

“Thus do you, kept in touch, exchange
Crows with a cock in neighbouring grange,
With whom if met you promptly fight
Over a point of lordly right : -
From cock to cock the signal sent
Is flashed across a continent,

A continent of sound, to bind
 A cock of spirit with his kind.
 Your dame, all mother, does not share
 Your public zeal or social care ;
 And what, unless she crow, to her
 The song of *cœur-cœur-cœur* ?

“ At dead of night when fancy swears
 To ghosts that flit upon the stairs,
 When robbers into houses creep
 And steal our substance while we sleep,
 When pain and care and conscience wake
 Till the diverting morning break,
 If reassured I chance to hear
 The heartening note of Chanticleer,
 Turning to fall asleep again
 And leaving fowls to watch for men,
 I know not strain that I prefer
 To *cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur*.

“ You were, O sacred bird, the last
 Socrates named before he passed
 To that great audit which is just ;
 And one, though he were less august,
 Could count upon your crowing twice
 What time his friend denied Him thrice.
 Long may your effigy be seen
 Topping the spire that tops the green,
 For your hereditary boast
 Is never to have quit your post,
 True to the Dawn, her harbinger
 In *cœur-cœur-cœur-cœur cœur*.”

IN THE MOONLIGHT

Dieu, . . .
Vous seul êtes réel, palpable et rayonnant ;
Tout le reste est de l'ombre.

VICTOR HUGO.

ALP of the cloud on cloud pillared in azure,
Cloud of the Alp on Alp floated o'er forest,
Glow with the glories of Day that is dying.

Nay, they are wan, and now darkness is falling,—
Fallen ; and hosts, the pale stars at their muster,
Glimmer in vain for the one that is vanished.

Earth in the gloom of night cast by her shadow,
Widowed and joyless, since sunless, bewails her :
Where is he, still is he, splendour supernal ?

Mellow orb mild of Day's lustre reflected,
Mounting the void of Sun's empery sovereign,
Hail to thee, hail to him ! thou dost behold him.

Thus shall arise in night,—night of the ages,
High to behold his beams, hushed to reflect them,
Heart of the seer that proclaims the Eternal.

Earthily-darkened I gaze on His image
Pure as the light that flows filtered in crystal
Touched with the tints of the soul's iridescence.

Meek and impassioned, O exquisite woman,
Thine is the sheen of face fixed on His splendours ;
Night is not now that my moon is arisen.

Me with the flocking clouds, shepherded nightly
Over the plain of Earth, order my being,
Moon in the heavens and not moon in the river,

Broken by waves, a low ladder of moonbeams,
Moved to the feet of each pilgrim at margin,
Wooring him downwards to dwell with illusions,

Moon, not the shadow moon—moon in the river,
Moon in the burnished leaves—mirrors of beeches,
Moon in the silvery rain of the willows,

Nay, not the shadow light cold and convincing ;
Nay, not the sun in moon waxing and waning ;
Nay, not the Sun but the Soul of creation.

HALLOWMAS

The nunnery
Of thy chaste breast . . . I fly.—LOVELACE.

IN the fiery sunset of the year,
In the month of glows and glories, all
Saints in heaven and earth, that saints revere,
Known, unknown, let pious hearts recall.

One on this the hither side of tomb,—
One is more than all, and her I sing,
Her I worship ; what imports it whom ?
Worshipful we grow with worshipping.

Think you that my saint is immature ?
Nay, for youth is not the saints among ;
Yet is she so fresh, unused and pure,
Never have I known a heart so young.

Dreary saints !—she is not one of these,
But vivacious, social, giving us
Rill-like laughter, witty repartees,
Wittier were she not so scrupulous.

But her words are deeds ; and when I gaze
At her woman fingers exquisite
Doing this or that which passes praise,
Not a thought of mine can better it.

Loyalty to duty simplifies
Life, her life, how sweetly ! cares refined
Look in light from her considerate eyes ;
Never is she too busy to be kind.

She not beautiful to coarser sight,
Seems to me most beautiful ; and fair,
When she comes between me and the light,
Dear her head is haloed in her hair.

Every dainty detail of her dress,
Hands and feet and body, like a shrine
Do I worship ; and the Poet bless,—
God, and her His Poem so divine.

Could I win her ? Nay, I deprecate
Every dream of love from such as she ;
Better, seeing I am not her mate,
She be loving than that she love me.

Kind and tender not to one above
Others fain to be, she seeks, in sum,
Many flowerets, not exclusive love
Costly, lone, the one chrysanthemum.

Marble were she, very stone may wake ;
And at times I see her flush and glow
Like the moorland ruddy with the brake
Glowing through the lightest veil of snow.

Then I think of women who have moved
Through the loose seraglio of the brain ;
Then I stand aside, abashed, reprov'd,
And my tears regretful fall like rain.

She that would not love me if she knew,
Must, as if she knew, be spared the fine
Pain of saints renunciant. Oh, adieu !
While the parting pang is only mine.

Haply I should more rejoice than grieve ;
Still my saint inviolate is mine own :
Adam left his Eden with his Eve ;
I depart from Paradise alone.

Yet alas for him, the lonely man
In all lives perhaps, because he fell
Ere he saw his saint, and only can
Rise to her level in a last farewell.

A MODERN CHRISTIAN

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—JESUS, *according to Saint John.*

THERE are—albeit not the best and first—
Men that have charm, and others—not the worst
And weakest—that have none,—men all their lives
Defrauded of affection, whom their wives
Love not or little love. For these, lest they
Revising Him, go back to God and say,
“Father, I had my share of human tears
But not of human love my seventy years,—
For these lone aliens in all lands, above
Others is Mother Earth and mother love
Devised by no blind Fate devoid of plan,
Feeling her way through Nature up to man.

Of these poor devils, bar the mother, what
If I be one, because my soul is not
Flush with my face and eyes. Some words with ease
I cannot lip and “love” is one of these ;
For reticence, shyness, stiffness, I retain
As disabilities of my Quaker strain ;
And maybe virtues that were theirs of grace
Are mine of nature, the bequest of race.
Besides, I have a heritable frown
By one of my forefathers handed down,
But not the heritable smile that went
To make the Lord of Jeremy relent ;

The rebel in the Bible must have smiled :
But I'm not Ephraim, a pleasant child.

Hard by a Hampshire town, my parents dead
Of fever at Calcutta, I was bred
By second parents, kind, for none had known
From their behaviour I was not their own,—
One of their progeny—a gracious band
As fair and good as any in the land ;
Benjamin was not selfish : girl or boy,
None relished what the rest did not enjoy,
None cared to touch a dainty when they found
The dish of peaches, say, would not go round.
Large families are unselfish ; and the most
Unconscious of her worth, the least engrossed
With self, the flower,—the pink, the gem,—the pearl
Of a large family is the middle girl.
The place unique in numbers is divine.
Christina was the fifth, the fifth of nine ;
And I to passion called “ exclusive ” prone,
Liked all the rest but loved Christine alone,
And knew that I was born a boy and made
Strong to protect a little girl afraid
Of dogs and cows. Two years her elder, quite,
I taught her as I learned to read and write ;
The one but just above us helps us best :
Or just beneath us, for Christina, lest
I should not know them, used to hear me say
My lessons, learning Latin in that way,
With ease, for she was quick, and I was slow,
Plodding, and gained the little that I know
With much ado. On holidays we played
Marbles—what not ?—together ; or we strayed

Into the fields and woods. My kite she flew,
And followed with her throbbing eyes. She knew
My birds, and I her flowers. When tired we clomb
Our sycamore and played at house-and-home ;
Or, in our natural chair of branches, conned
The fairy tales, of which Christine was fond,
The stories of adventure, my delight,
Long lovely ballads till we could recite
And rhymes of mariners and minstrels old,—
Poems that haunt me still. At times I told
My tale, impossible but well received
By listener, that implicitly believed.
And if I said, “Avaunt, thou fiend ! aroint
Thee, witch !” the girl at that blood-curdling point
Tightened her hold upon my hand and pressed
Still closer to my side. Christine caressed
Us all alike till—later on—I cared
Not for caresses which so many shared.
The man is coarse indeed that cares to fold
In his a hand warm with another’s hold.

That tale was never done, and now I could
Not spin a yarn to keep an urchin good
Or soothe an ailing child—Christina can—
So false is, Know the boy, you know the man ;
For I was sent away from home to school,
A public one, that with its iron rule
Pinned young imaginations within rails ;
And so good-bye to poems, ballads, tales,
Bade I, that toiled until the term was closed
As if Christina were the prize proposed,
Moved by my latent love, alone the pure,
Unmixed with thought and thought of self, secure

From fear and anguish. Later—when the last
Sands of my life at King's were ebbing fast,
And schoolmate in a fit of frankness showed
The likeness of his "little girl" bestowed
Above his mantel in a velvet frame—
My feeling leaping to the light became
Thought, and I knew whose image was enshrined
With its thousand and one expressions in my mind.
Love was and is unthinkable apart
From her that held and holds my stubborn heart.
But from the moment that I knew I ceased
To show my love and my reserve increased.
And once when I came home and she flew down
The rectory steps, delighted, in a gown,
A woman sprung upon me, I was mute
And shied, confused and flushed, at her salute.
Then she drew back surprised and even hurt,
But rallying said in accents crisp and curt
How mannish I had grown. And after this
She gave me not the fraction of a kiss.

I was content, a barrier set between
Me and the sisterly kisses of Christine.
Our coinage not the same, I would not take
Her kiss for mine. And ever in the wake
Of terms at Trinity, with hope high-flown
I came again, my love in absence grown
And greatening with my growth. At last I stood
Well in the tripos, donned a Master's hood
In time, and realised her "Dominie"
Given in fun. My hobby happily
Became my business, for I filled a post
In an historic school, a mile at most

Away from home. And when my work was o'er
With pace prohibitive of fellow-bore
Whose way was mine, I fled our abbey town
And tramped across the fields to Bracken Down,
Her father's rectory, with little trace
Of what I felt in this impassive face ;
It has become far easier to conceal
The feelings that I suffer than reveal.
My very shock of hair, perverse and thick,
That soon outgrows the fashion, has a trick
Of hiding my not open forehead ; how
Oft has Christina swept it from my brow
With her caressing fingers ! then of hue
Leaden, these eyes—the friendly call them blue—
Sunken are overhung with eaves of brows
That darken what of light one's orbs may house ;
Moustache, besides, concealing every curve,
My face expresses little but reserve.

Thus reticent of nature I was mute
Of choice in love and would prefer no suit ;
I was not one that carries off and weds
A woman over half a hundred heads,
That strives with stolen marches to forestall,
Much less supplant a man, or catch the ball,
Love, in rebound. My virtue or my vice
Is being cautious, pretiose, and nice ;
And I would have her of her own accord,
Unprompted, love and choose her future lord.
But preference—an organ not in Gall—
Was in Christina, though not absent, small ;
In where to wander, what to talk about,
Or do, she seemed moved rather from without

Than from within ; unless, for she was good
And made as many happy as she could,
On errands in her father's parish. Eld,
Poverty, weakness, sickness, what repelled
Others, attracted her, that was so kind
And to the grave defects of others blind.
Kindness is her besetting sin indeed,
For kindness looks like love and may mislead ;
And hers, as some occasion called, misled
Two college men that with her father read
For orders. It was fun, or almost fun,
To see the twain alternate in the sun
Or shadow of Christine, as each might win
Or lose, both angry with a third thrown in,
Three glowering at a fourth with every turn
Of this teetotum ; till they came to learn
The kindness of Christina gave no room
For coxcombs and philandering fools to plume
Themselves upon a favour. One averred
—I was their confidant—that he preferred
A faulty woman to a perfect saint.
But he, not having reason for complaint,
Adores Christina still and loves his wife,
Without, for some are meek, domestic strife.
Indeed the lovers of Christine fell back
In time on those of whom there was no lack,—
Her sisters, till, these days of wooing sped,
She was the only daughter left unwed.

Was I delighted with this exodus
Of reading men at leisure, amorous ?
No, seeing I was jealous not of one
She cared for, but of every mother's son

Because she cared for all, and one above
Another of us did not like or love.
This lack of preference was her main defect,
Worse than a fault,—a fault you may correct—
And fatal to her lover. Still, had she
Not cared for all, she had not cared for me,
That am not lovable. *What men profess*
Is just the quality they not possess ;
Therefore beware of all confession ?—Pooh !
I do not like myself and why should you
Like what I cannot. Yet who dare deny
That only love for love can satisfy,
Since passion unrequited stands in doubt.
As breathing in no less than breathing out
Is respiration, being loved as well
As loving is perfect love. Though poets tell
Another tale, that utterance which awakes
Not echo from the world, the love that makes
Not image of itself, nor can surprise
A fellow-feeling in another's eyes,
Loses conviction of itself ; and crost
In love a man bemoans his labour lost,
Because his hardships must be faced anew
Ere he find mutual love, alone the true.

The secret of a woman that she speaks
Not of or knows, is what her lover seeks
To find and fears to learn, for when he knows
It, oft the spell dissolves, the glamour goes ;
God were not God if God could be divined.
And, with her secret flashed across my mind,
Thoughts of Christine I had not entertained
Buzzed like a swarm about her and profaned.

Loving but her that did not one above
Another of her friends admire or love,
I struck for privilege, a right apart,
A place especial in Christina's heart,
Holding : " Not God Himself, who loves us all,
Loves all alike, whether they climb or crawl ;
A mother hugs the most dependent most,
A house the son of whom it best can boast,
A bard the song that is like Fickle's fast
Friend or the Sultan's favourite wife—his last."
And knowing that she thought the marriage
state

A woman's true vocation, even fate,
I saw she might consent to be my wife
But to complete an else imperfect life ;
And then—now this is of the grand mistakes
The grossest that a doting lover makes—
And then the outposts of the senses past
The citadel, the soul, were mine at last.
While thus I mused abetting fortune played
Into my trembling hands, for I was made
House-master in a celebrated seat
Scholastic, whose authorities discreet
Suggested marriage. Then, with one of old,
I broke my box of alabaster, told
My love, which had not earlier crossed her mind,
For I had been so close or she so blind.
Still she, her love more understood than said,
Promised to be my wife, and we were wed.
But had another of her wooers been
Bolder, he might perhaps have won Christine ;
For " passive in affection " she confest
Herself to me, which rankled in my breast.

Passive-in-love like Hamlet's mother might
Marry her brother, with Apollyon plight.
Her "passive" was the circumstance amiss ;
"Bliss" has it "but" and therefore is not bliss :
The grudging gods have never with a will
Vouchsafed a perfect gift of good or ill ;
Add rue to nectar, nectar add to rue,
And tell me which is nicer of the two ?

Yet is Christine the sweetest wife that man
Boasted in since the blest estate began,
As fond indeed, it cannot be denied,
As if she loved not all the world beside,
And tender to her sons although they share
Her with the boys committed to our care.
She mothers all the house, none homesick long,
Especially the weak, the never strong,
The stubborn, the rebellious. I confess
She puts a premium upon naughtiness ;
But we that cannot boast of being bad,
Or mischievous, or strange, or sick, or sad,
Seem to ourselves, the strong and self-controlled,
At times the most neglected of the fold.
And did Christina's partial rule become
The universal course of Christendom,
Safeguarding fools and keeping knaves alive,
Not fittest but unfittest would survive,
And after æons of decadence, man
Would end in monkeydom, where he began.

In social functions she reveals the same
Taste for the mental halt, the moral lame ;

No epicure in persons is Christine ;
Nothing to her is common or unclean :—
Not “ yes-and-no ”-ing neophyte that lacks
Character ere she take a seal like wax ;
Not priest that loves in drawing-rooms to pen
One of the ladies of his flock, not men,
In corners, looking earnest, for he deems
His parish nothings are religious themes ;
Not errant or Colonial gloriose
In his conceit “ I-I ”-ing through his nose ;
Not fashion’s thrall that screws herself in stays
And dyes her cheeks with rose, her locks with
maize,
A faded flirt, as mournful to my mind
As a musician deaf, a painter blind.
With these and such as these the gentle guest
May well resent hobnobbing in the breast,
And when he finds his host, the facile heart,
Sorted with his inferiors may depart.
Poor is the compliment of affection paid
Alike to Gentleman and Jack and jade.
Lavish your royal bounty love, and he
That held it once an honour, a degree,
A rank, a title, an estate, and bore
It like a star upon his breast before,
May cease to prize it. Shall the fit and few
Fall into line or figure in a queue,
Or stand where standing room is scarce allowed ?
I am not stunted but abhor a crowd
At church and theatre, nor see, nor hear,
The scenic star, the petted pulpiteer.
“ Which is your choice,—a cottage that you call
Yours, or a palace that you share with all ? ”

Asked I my wife. "A palace," she replied ;
"A cottage," says a maid well qualified
By service. But the trap-like question goes
Deeper than maid suspects or matron knows.
I could forgive her many faults if she
Should focus her affection and on me,
Who love but her, who have not known, apart
From her, distress of soul, delight at heart,
And feel aggrieved at times that she should break
Her sleep or fast for other people's sake.
And this exclusiveness of mine betrays
Itself in many, yes, a thousand ways :
Let Jupiter and Saturn roll in light,
I wish them joy of all their moons at night,
Give me one friend and love and moon and sun ;
I cannot worship God if more than one.

After the flight of many days I con,
Now that the feeling prompting it is gone,
My moody strain as if it were not mine,
And damn it in the name of all the Nine.
But you that read another's ditty, deal
Gently with feeling that you do not feel,—
With thought that is not yours, in verse that owed
Its lustre to the light in which it glowed.
A common pebble, dull as soon as dried,
When it was freshly washed up by the tide
Glistened and flashed and dazzled like a gem
Meet for an amulet or a diadem.
Yet are there poems jewels, crystal spheres,
Rubies of blood and diamonds of tears.

I for long days that mount to weeks have lain
Unmanned, unsexed, by sickness, weakness, pain,

And been the while but seldom unaware
Of my Christina's unremitting care ;
Yet since my mind has not been always clear
I have heard things I was not thought to hear.
And once at dead of night and turn of tide
I felt Christina kneeling at my side,
Holding in hers the wasted hands she prest
In emphasis of that supreme request
Audible in her agony of prayer,
That He the Father,—Mother God would spare
Her one, her only, love. And when I heard
My languid in her living pulses stirred ;
Come was the crisis when, though passing ill,
The patient may recover if he will.
I willed to live if only for my friend.
And from that moment I began to mend.
Unless they may to Heaven together hie,
None loving and beloved desire to die.

Now convalescent, I begin to feel
My frame, as once I felt, a coat of steel,
Before this illness cured . . . nay, never smart,
Sickness, disaster, healed a human heart ;
Strange gods are these, as false as gods of stone :
Worship not sorrow ; worship love alone.
Now convalescent, I perceive the wrong
That I have done Christina all along,
Daring to wish her, not a fault the less,
But a perfection, but a grace express—
The grace that were, if not their sum, above
All other graces, Universal Love,
The life of God, the secret of His Son ;
The force that keeps the stars and systems one,

The disc of day the centre of desire,
The maiden silver of the moon entire :
Perish this power and into flinders then
Cosmos will fly and Chaos come again,—
The force, the life, the grace that is above
All other graces, Universal Love.

This Love once lived in Palestine, the mark
Of those that follow even in the dark
And far behind their Leader to the Morn,
Is in Christine, a Christian,—Christian born,
Born in the purple. Who indeed are not
Christianised in our Christendom somewhat,—
Even the men that least desire to claim,
And most repudiate the Christian name ?—
Gathering where they have not strewed result,
And reaping where they have not sown a cult,
Which humbly as the race itself began
And was the cradle song of infant Man.
If Eden, Sabbath, Temple, Ritual hailed
From Babylonia, is their worth assailed ?
Shipped were the Virgin Birth, the sacred Three
From Egypt, are they therefore lies ? And be
They superstitions, then, the Christ divest
Of trappings, like the tree the Persian drest
In trumpery mantles, shall emerge and shine
In native majesty, not less divine,
Love in the flesh. The world is on his track
Making some paces forth and fewer back,
And shall arrive at that millennial age
Depicted in the Hebrew poet's page,
When ills imposed by man on man shall cease
And Deus Imperator reign in peace ;

When all religions of the night, not day,
And creeds that guide, not glow, have passed away
Like stars that when the veil of light is drawn
Across the darkness disappear in dawn.
The dawn shall also melt in light above
Stellar and solar, Universal Love.

AN EARLY CHRISTIAN

Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—JESUS.

I HUNDREDS and hundreds of years ago
Lived in the land where the red lilies blow,
Where HE stood in my path and barred my flight
To a deed of darkness at fall of night.

I saw but his eyes—and but once—of flame,
I heard not his voice, I knew not his name,
But love for my Rescuer glowed in my breast,
Making it meet for so sacred a guest.

Thereafter I pushed, lest it wound his feet
That might pass this way, the stone from the street,
Welcomed the stranger that paused at my door,
“Himself, perhaps!” and I sheltered the poor.

A Christian I—without saying a creed,
Or singing a psalm or telling a bead,
Or looking for aught but HIM in reward—
Entered with rapture the Heaven of my Lord.

WISH WHAT GOD WILLS

What happens is what I wish.—EPICTETUS.

WISH what God wills. If grief beset your gate,
Or Death in wake of sickness bar your way,
Welcome the worst and bare your breast to fate.

Wish what God wills ; and if from sun to sun
You plod, or flash across the Dark to Day,
Choose as His choice the course that leaves us none.

Wish what God wills, for what He wills is well :
Best work to handle,—what we have to do ;
Best place to live in,—where we have to dwell.

Wish what God wills ; the worst He wills is best,
The best for all and so the best for you
Content to share His ruling with the rest.

Wish what God wills. He wills not what is wrong,
What man or woman should redress or right ;
Struggle is God's gymnastic making strong.

Would you be loving ?—love ; your neighbour find
And serve ; the fallen raise, the sad delight :
Thus you win love—your own for all mankind.

Would you be constant to your friends and kin ?—

Pray for the ones you love ; no prayer is vain
If you the crown of all perfection win.

Would you be brave ?—with fear not parleying, do

The brave deed and be valiant. Strength we gain
In being strong, and truth in being true.

Many the problems vexing sages here,

The ways of Heaven perplex the most devout ;
Yet is our path of conduct straight and clear.

He whom men call the Great Misunderstood,—

Unknown it may be, leaves us not in doubt ;
God wills us to be strong and wise and good.

A SICK DEBTOR

Death . . . makes these odds all even.—SHAKESPEARE.

THEY 'a carr'ed the crops an' picked aw the 'ops ;
Theer's a frost on the land an' winter's nigh 'and ;
While I lay every one o' my twelve an' odd stun
In pain as 'ud knock the grit out o' rock.
Theer's the robin agin come all the way in,
And 'is throbbin' brown eye seems to say " You will die."

A summer's bout o' the grindin' gout,
An' to pay for it too 'ull make a chap blue,
A-spendin' not earnin' an' a-keepin' on turnin'
It over, "'Ow find the rent aw be'ind ?"
And there ain't no escape out o' the scrape,
As fur as I spy, exceptin' to die.

When I marr'ed my Sal—oh, weren't 'er a gal !—
I insure' my life for the good o' my wife,
And 'ad ought to 'a laid, when the Dairy Farm paid,
By summat in store for the wolf at the door,
But then I were strong, nor knowed afore long
I should 'a to lay by an' p'raps not to die.

We wadn't in clover nor 'adn't much over
At the end o' the yur, though we sweat me and 'er,
And I 'a to 'ire three for Sally and me.
And the milk were pure, not doctored for sure ;
Ask Sal ; 'er'll bear me out, and I dare
Not lay 'ere and lie ; to-morr' I may die.

I were may'ap a soft sort o' chap,
As never could save while a fool or a knave
Or a brat in my beat 'adn't nothink to eat.
'Twere all out o' love for myself if I guv,
For no feller livin' is fonder of givin' ;
And now I can't buy my fodder or die.

'E's artful as eats and swaller's 'is sweets,
Like a kid, that the slavin' and savin' and shavin'
May let 'im go shares—poor beggar!—with theirs.
This wadn't my game but it comes to the same,
If I 'a to depend on neighbour and friend
For what I let fly, unless I can die.

I're punished enough for bein' so rough
On Sal that windy night of our shindy,
When I kick' up a brawl about nothink at all.
Ask me what for our kings go to war,
Men git to blows an' friends become foes,
An' I couldn' reply were I to die.

I called 'er the cuss o' my life an'—wuss—
“ Carr-ots ! ” You see I were cross as could be,
An' 'er can't abear 'er own colour 'air.
Then 'er face come white an', for all it were night,
'Er clap' on 'er 'at an' whip' up the brat,
An' guv no good-bye to a man as'll die.

An' 'er ain't sent a line nor made e'er a sign
From that night till now ; though I 'ears as 'ow
'Er works at a mill. 'Er dunno I're ill,
And 'er sha'n't while I lay like a log all the day.
'Er 'ull never forgive me so long as I live ;
'Er sperrit's so 'igh : but 'er will if I die.

It's 'ard to be done for an' nussed by one
As don't keer a straw for 'er brother-in law,
But 'ints as I makes the most o' my aches,
An' says : "*I* should be dead if I kep' to my bed.
As them Faith-'Ealers tal yer, think you be wal."
'Er'll own sure-*ly* I're ill if I die.

When I looks for my Sally 'er won't in the valley
Be bendin' above for the last word o' love ;
But my brother's wife while I breathe out my life
Will stand an' look on, an' when I be gone
'Er 'ull say, "'E's at peace ; it's a 'appy release" :
An' it will be, ay, ay, from 'er if I die.

They'll bury me 'side our babby what died ;
An' of them as stan' round when I're put in the ground,
The ones as I keer for the most won't be theer ;
But as sure as a gun 'er 'ull foller,—the one
As I like least of aw, my relation-in-law.
An' no one 'ull cry more'n me when I die.

When the cows is sold, an' lo an' be'old !
The insurance shows I can pay what I owes,
An' a nice little sum as is over 'ull come
To my Sally, they'll call me sharp arter all,
And be turrible struck with my stroke o' luck,—
Insurin', oh my ! if I manage to die.

An' Sally is bound to come to the mound,
The babby one green ; an' then 'er 'ull lean
Over my own without e'er a stone,
An' feel a bit sad, and forgit all the bad
In 'im as lays low far under the snow
With 'is face to the sky no moor for to die.

'Er'll think o' the good ; as I chop' all the wood
And never ast Sal to go to the wal
For wa'er ; an' swep' up the snow, and kep'
'Er in chips ; an' come down 'ow often 'er foun'
The kettle a-b'ilin' without 'er a-t'ilin'.
'Er won't want to deny me my due if I die.

An' 'er—ugh, my toe !—'ad only to go
Out o' my sight to seem in the right.
It 'ud do your 'eart good like mine it would,
To look at 'er pans an' 'er pails an' 'er cans
An' 'er boards an' 'er bricks ; an' in looks 'er licks
Any woman 'ereby ; if 'er don't, may I die !

'Er 'ull own 'er wrong, since it wadn' for long,
Not to put up an' wait with 'er 'ot-'eaded mate.
'Er can't 'ate the dad 'er sees in the lad
As favours 'im ; rather, 'e'll win for 'is father
The 'eart of 'is mother an' kick at another
Secon' 'and tie long arter I die.

But 'er's welcome,—my gal, to better 'ersal
As soon as 'er can come acrost a good man,
As won't ever be led 'ome swipecy to bed,
More cooler maybe, not more lovin' than me ;
An' I 'ope when 'e's past the plane or the last,
'Er afore 'er need try the workus 'ull die.

Death I don't cuss, but take kindly to ; yuss,
So often I've sin it come to the minute,
When there wadn't a one thing else to be done.
The dead any'ow are out of the row,
Shot of the storm ; an' snug in the warm
An' sheltered an' dry : I're glad I shall die.

They don't want down theer no baccy nor beer,
Nor cost for their keep ; an' clo'es is dirt-cheap :
Where they 'a went they 'ant to pay rent ;
Lord Everleigh Grand, 'e don't own the land,
It's the land owns the lord when 'e's under the sward :
It's the rich as may sigh when they come for to die.

Theer they ain't poor nor sick any moor,
Nor give no trouble, nor bend theirsels double
With gout, nor grow older, nor git the cold shoulder,
Nor ask to be missed an' cuddled an' kissed,
Nor turn in their sleep as is sound an' deep ;
Nor moor shouldn' I, if I could die.

But sakes alive now ! what be the row ?
Lilywhite's lowin', Cockleum crowin',
Rover a-springin', Dick bu'st into singin' ;
Puss stops 'er lickin' : the door latch is clickin'.
My God ! it ain't Sal ?—it is my own gal ! . . .
I be wal vu-ry nigh, an' blowed if I'll die !

THE SUNNY SIDE

To think is to be full of sorrow.—KEATS.

O N days in dreary London lost,
And passage up and down,
I tramp when Regent's Park is crost
By Portland Road to town.

To left there lies the dismal east,
Its famine, squalor, cold,
Belaboured wife, o'erdriven beast
And infant wan and old.

And in its shade I used to fare
With artificial night
Because it soothed my soul to share
The gloom I could not light.

His head erect, his gait alert,
A man I used to meet,
Who took on London's western skirt
The sunny side of street.

He was not fashioned to rebel
But rub his hands with glee,
As if the world were all so well
It could not better be.

When we had seen each other oft
And come to recognise,
Reserve had vanished and we doffed
Our hats in friendly wise.

At last he crossed with outstretched hand,
And I to meet him strode,
Till we were on that neutral land
The middle of the road.

The weather matter brought to close,
Another was begun
With *would I tell him why I chose*
The shade and not the sun ?

The man as confidently spoke
In favour of the rays
As if it were a shadow stroke
And not the sun that slays ;

Yea, like a lawyer with a brief
For sunlight showered in streams ;
He testified his fond belief
In man's imbibing beams.

The matron's blinds that fall like blight,
The lady's parasol,
A dim and irreligious light,—
He hated one and all.

But while he spoke a brewer's dray
Came rolling down the street,
And then we both, in traffic's way
Back to the flags retreat.

But when we reached them we descried
The barter we had made,
For I was on the sunny side
And he was in the shade.

Nor did we then our talk renew,
The traffic thicker grown,
But waved across the road adieu,
And forward fared alone.

But now my jaunty cane I swing,
And what I sought I shun,
Because it is a pleasant thing
To feel the blessed sun.

Though millions in the shadow move,
Whose lot I must deplore,
Is that a reason I should prove
One miserable more ?

But now my street acquaintance, won
A convert to the ways
Abandoned by myself, has done
With what he used to praise.

It grieves me much to hear him slight
The theatre of the lark,
To see the man that loved the light
Addicted to the dark.

And hoping some amends to make
For mischief wrought, alack !
The road I cross, his hand I take
And seek to bring him back.

I hear his reason, much abused,
For gloom, with all regret,
And recognise the one I used
To him when first we met.

Thus while our breath is vainly spent
It cannot be denied
His is the better argument
And mine the better side.

Ye reckless talkers, livers, heed
The moral of my tale :
Don't argue for the course or creed
You would not have prevail.

THE DEVIL'S VERSION OF HIMSELF
IN
THE SAINT AND THE SCHOLAR

In quantum peccatores sunt, non sunt, sed ab esse deficient.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

The Lord.—Is nothing ever right for you upon the Earth?

Mephistopheles.—Nothing, Lord.—*Faust.*

Diabolus loquitur

WE had dined and were still at the board
In the fumes of champagne and cigars,
A baker's, a publisher's, dozen,
Good fellows, a very bad lot,
And were glancing in talk meteoric
On all betwixt Earth and the Stars
When "the Devil" arrested our flight
À propos—no matter of what.

Of course I travel incog.,
And have rubbed off my tail with the rest;
My coat, which I change with the times,
Is cut in London or Paris,
And your sprouting young Prigs with their
Mother are far too knowing if prest
To grant there is any such person
As "Sairey's" pet myth, Mythith Harris.

I was a vestige, they said,
 "Of what had been only a name,
 Which will never work out of the speech
 Of parsons, and persons in drink ;
 As the Sun till Earth stagger and stop
 Shall ' rise ' as ever the same :
 O God, thou art safe in thy Heaven ;
 Having thought thee, we cannot unthink.

"God cannot be proved or disproved,
 You take him or leave as you list ;
 And, argument granting you God,
 Your Devil is but a negation ;
 The worm is a notch above him
 That does not and cannot exist."
 Thereat I pinched myself blue
 To be sure I was yet in creation.

Only one believed in my being,
 And he's a sot and a fool,
 That plunges foot first into wrong
 With a hopeless passion for right ;
 That injures me more in his cups
 Than a church, a chapel, a school ;
 Yes, does me more harm in a day
 Than I do myself good in a night.

His forehead is far in the rear
 And his muzzle much in the front ;
 And the subaltern flesh in command,
 He vows that his life is a hog's,

Since devil and all "by the lot,"
 —As for book connoisseur on the hunt—
 His creed is intact, and who question
 My being are "blasphemous dogs."

His face which was swollen with wine,
 With wrath grew bigger than ever ;
 And true to his colours he swore
 He believed in the Devil and Co.
 —First item of Creed, not Apostles'
 But parody's wickedly clever ;
 "And Miss Nevil," said one, "for our God
 Is the best man and woman we know."

"Who, the deuce, is Miss Nevil ?" asked I,
 And learnt that she lived in the Close
 When her father, the Canon, was up
 From his cure of "No Souls" in Glamorgan ;
 She was pious and churchy, perhaps,
 But as sweet as her sire was morose,
 Adopted a parish while here
 And played on a mission-house organ.

Then that nuisance, my fastest adherent,
 Whose breath had been bated at first,
 Whose face, for a moment angelic,
 Had lost every mark of the beast,
 Was fired with the thought that a name
 Should be mouthed by a crew thus accurst,
 And was ready to call out his man.
 "Here's a duel," I thought, "at the least."

But no ! for our exquisite host,
 Whose devil is " very bad form,"
 An artist, whose sin unto death
 Is a sin against canons of taste,
 Perceiving our atmosphere charged
 With combustibles brewing a storm,
 Arose ere it broke overhead
 And proposed a toast in his haste.

" The Problem of Evil," he said,
 " May have posed the Sphinx, who propounded ;
 For me, what divines have called ' sin '
 Is a fact with no naughtiness in it ;
 Imagine an Eden without it !
 That Eden were dull and confounded :
 Though priests should exist without sin,
 I could not exist for a minute.

" Unjust and ungrateful it were
 For Man to dissemble his debt
 To Lucifer, Eblis or Evil
 —The name to myself is all one ;
 And artists are bound above all
 To acknowledge and never forget
 As light without darkness were lost
 So Art without Sin were undone.

" By shadows and faults the figures
 Of painters and novelists live :
 Sin is the clay that they work in,—
 The priest and divine and . . . Miss Nevil ;

The saint would have little to do
 And her love have naught to forgive
 But for what she were bettered by,—she !
 A spice, if not more, of the Devil.

“ This toast, the last that I give,
 You divine it, gentlemen, yes,
 Is the Second of Duad, the person
 Whose part is the first to reveal ;
 For the sake of the Lord who is Light,
 May his shadow never be less ! ”
 Then he drank and all drank to myself,
 Whom he called by my pet name of “ De’il.”

I rose and responded in form,
 And they thought I was joking, of course :
 “ Our devilship more than his due
 Has gotten by grace of our host ;
 God does not depend upon us,
 Though he uses his rebels perforce,
 Which is mean ; but we thank our confrères
 For their cordial reception of toast.

“ We are not a Second Supreme
 Of fraud and malice and hate ;
 The world would breathe freely we know,
 Were the universe under our nod ;
 Our programme is mere opposition,
 We furnish a Left for the State,
 And if God were a devil no doubt
 We should make an excellent God.

“ But our aims were more generous once.

When a journeyman god for the Lord
Had completed your planet we came
To echo the ‘ good ’ of the maker ;
An eagle was mangling a lamb,
A wolf had bloodied the sward,
And a robin, that lives on live worms,
Was looking as meek as a Quaker.

“ For Nature’s a journeyman god ;
Not a bungler, I’ll own, but a brute,
Of resource but not of remorse,
And bound by no Bible or Code ;
When the glebe is as hard as a flint
And the fount is frozen and mute,
The thrush, as if help were in man,
Drops dead at his feet on the road.

“ For Nature’s a merciless brute ;
Albeit you men in support
Of every barbarity quote
The beautiful, heartless thing ;
Nature your precedent vile
For lust and slaughter and sport,
You lengthen and broaden and blacken
The blot on the reign of your King.

“ Such a system of carnage and thrall
To preserve a butcher in being
Is worse than the wickedest scheme
Of angels and men that rebel ;

But to question the ways of the Lord
 And his proxies cringing and kneeling,
 Is to hoist the flag of revolt
 And burn for ever in Hell.

“ But a truce to the topic of self !
 Miss—what’s her name ?—Nevil’s a saint,”
 . . . I paused for it thundered . . . “ if not
 I shall know for myself after dinner :
 But the wheat and the chaff in a man
 Are so mixed that distinction is faint ;
 Which is tweedledum sheep of a saint,
 And which tweedledee goat of a sinner ?

“ A saint is a woman that squanders
 Her life in suppressing herself ;
 Not wrathful, nor lying, nor proud ;
 For negations are far less expressive
 Of us than of her—as inane
 As a doll of a Virgin in Delf :
 The woman is worse than depraved,—
 She is dull, if not harsh and aggressive.

“ She reads not a book but her Bible,
 And therefore knows nothing of it ;
 She shudders at Biblical Critics ;
 Your Herman would rob her of hope
 In a heaven and of faith in her Lord,
 With his learning, acumen and-wit,
 Because he knows Hebrew from Hebrew
 As you know Chaucer from Pope.

" This Herman's a heretic, since
 The orthodox fear him and flout,
 But at Lucifer more than at him
 Are all their anathemas hurled ;
 The goat yclept ' scape ' of the Jews
 Is a type of the Devil no doubt ;
 I am charged with the crimes of an anarch,
 I bear the sins of the world.

" But the storm waxes louder and louder,
 The heavens alone will be heard ;
 And hark ! what a crash overhead !
 A steeple is struck in the town :
 The thunder is King of the Courts ;
 The last—inarticulate—word,
 His last, is the Lord's ; let him have it :
 The Devil himself will sit down."

With lightning the firmament thrilled ;
 In façade confronting our gaze
 Every window and pane of the line
 Flashed out as if fired from within,
 Then sank into gloom for a breath,
 And a fool presuming to praise,
 Our host, who " revelled in storms,"
 Subdued every light as a " sin."

The guests like a group on the stage,
 With faces—were they their own ?—
 Illumined in flashes of lightning
 And ghastly with all sorts of yellows,

Had cast off their company smile
 For the look that they wore when alone ;
 You never saw faces so glum
 As those of these "jolly good fellows."

To my fastest adherent I said,
 "Let us wanton elsewhere until morn."
 But the wretch was afraid of the bolt,
 Who was not afraid of his wife ;
 I rose all the same to depart
 And left the coward in scorn,
 For he felt himself safe in a crowd,—
 This bully that feared for his life.

"Better die and have done with Death,
 That hangs overhead by a hair !"
 I thought as I threaded the lanes
 To tout for the pious in Lent,
 And seemed to be braving the heavens
 In the frame of the flesh that I bare,
 Though the lightning was quenched in the rain
 And the force of the thunder was spent.

"Ah, there is that overgrown church,
 The cathedral, piled upon all ;
 It takes up the room of the town ;
 I'm glad I don't live in this hole !
 If the Minster isn't too large,
 Then everything else is too small ;
 I hate a cathedral, although
 It doesn't cost Hell a soul.

“ It is time I was housed by the Canon.
My delicate task is to probe
The heart of his daughter, Miss Nevil ;
I guess she is not very good.
As it suits me not to be seen,
I will doff this perceptible robe ;
When I chuck this encumbrance of flesh
I shall be wherever I would.”

For whenever the dead that are damned,
Whenever we devils are fain
For debauch in women and wine,
We spirits are easily sped,—
We borrow the flesh of the live
Enslaved by passions that reign ;
And the ribald whom late I had loaned
Reeled off by himself to his bed.

.

Yes, this is the saint and asleep
—I had thought she was praying perhaps—
Her Bible is close to her couch,
And her Keble open at season ;
One might as well sleep in a church,
With that crucifix there in an apse
Half lit by a taper's half light,
Which churches affect and with reason.

The sleeper awakes with a start
And raises herself on her arm ;
The force of the storm is not spent,
The thunder comes back with a crash ;

For that heirloom of ages alone
 Is the gentle watcher's alarm
 When the minster of stone inflorescent
 Is kindled again in a flash.

The lightning flickers and fades,
 The thunder in distance is lost,
 The lady sinks back on her couch ;
 Her eyelids are raised ere they close ;
 On her warm and exquisite bosom
 Her hands are unconsciously crost,
 And her face and features relax
 In an image of marble repose.

The saint is sleeping and this
 Is Lucifer's moment supreme ;
 O Sentiment, counterfeit Love
 And whisper a word in her ear !
 With the passion of person unknown,
 I will enter her life in a dream. . . .
 Alas ! her circle is charmed ;
 I cannot enter her sphere.

The game, then, is up ere begun ;
 And, baulked of the sweetest of ladies,
 I pine like a lover for one
 Whom or ever I saw her I craved ;
 What profit the fry that will shoal
 Of themselves to the place under Hades ?
 Heaven longs for the one that is lost,
 And Hell for the one that is saved.

This woman, a saint if you will,
 More charming than sinners, I find,
 Not false when fain to be sweet
 Nor unkind when fain to be true ;
 The strong are easily frank
 And the tender are easily kind ;
 But to be both faithful and sweet
 Is a grace that is granted to few.

She is lowly, and vanity, sure,
 Is not saved as a sin for confession ;
 Besides her features are plain
 But for dark and beautiful eyes,
 The shrine of a beautiful soul,
 Whose charm is the charm of expression ;
 The beauty that conquers the face
 Is Virtue's most subtle surprise.

Me loveliness moves but with pain ;
 My soul of affection is void ;
 The fountains of pleasure are dried ;
 And nothing is left me but lust,
 Intermittent, renascent and brief,
 By proxy most sordid enjoyed ;
 For refused the desires of the flesh
 Entice and embraced they disgust.

The flame of me sinks into night
 With the sense of an infinite loss ;
 O Nazareth, blank is thy gospel,
 O Christendom, idle thy cult

Of repentance, surrender and grace
 At the feet of the Christ on the Cross,
 If one cannot repent of revolt,
 If he do but repent of result !

Oh, infinite loss everlasting,
 I fall ever farther from Heaven ;
 My woes waxing sordid and gross,
 I fail in recalling my bliss ;
 Since I fell from the heart of the light,
 The First of the Stars that were Seven,
 I have sunk and am sinking unstayed
 In the night of the formless abyss.

Thy heaven could not render me blest,
 Nor thyself restore me to peace ;
 I have nothing to beg of thee, God,
 Excepting the hope of a term ;
 Let *pereat* cancel thy *fiat* ;
 Let pain that is purposeless cease ;
 That do for a devil who writhes
 Which a man will do for a worm.

I know thou wert æons B.C.
 But remember the rule that is golden,
 The rule of Confucius and Christ ;
 The grace that a devil would do
 The Lord in my plight do the devil ;
 Besides, were the favour withholden,
 Thy son that is human would prove
 The more divine of the two.

He hears not ; perhaps he is dead
 Like a sun that is spent in the sky,
 Whose rays are reaching us still ;
 And his angels suppress every groan,
 Every laugh, in their terror of me.
 But with God the Devil would die ;
 The Lord has no power to de cease
 Like his creatures extinct but in stone.

Too long in beseeching for death,
 Ourself and our Court are bemeaned ;
 Contentment is better than prayer ;
 Myself to my part I resign ;
 The Lord shall find to His cost
 It expensive to keep up a fiend,
 For God is not infinite God
 If His Being is bounded by mine.

Let me rally my forces again
 And away with this whining *alas* ;
 The Leader of Hell against Heaven
 May not prate, who will, of submission ;
 And nothing is here to be done,
 But to flop with a whiff as I pass
 The crucifix face to the wall,
 And excite in the saint superstition.

.
 Ha ! here is my Biblical Critic,
 My Herman, awake with the dawn,
 The scholar ascetic as saints
 Is at work before nuns are at prayers,

And picking his way through the text
 With his bulk of sinew and brawn,
 While the rickety lodging-house slave
 Is lugging the coal up the stairs.

“The best of all possible worlds!”—
 What ostrich with head in the sand
 Ever hatched such a phrase; it’s the worst,
 Which wasn’t and isn’t my fault;
 I made not the world, nor control;
 But had I the reins in my hand,
 I’d see to it Earth should go better,
 Or Earth should come to a halt.

The Creator and Christ are not one,
 For Creation’s unchristian as ante,
 Herein go the weak to the wall,
 And the cunning it is that survive;
 And Christendom’s far after Christ,
 Whether swearing by Milton or Dante,
 Or the young and lusty would walk,
 And the feeble and aged drive.

If Herman arose from his desk,
 If Herman opened the door,
 If Herman hauled up the coal
 —Half a hundred if measure were full,
 How he’d twirl his moustache were he down,—
 The hare-hunting, “drawing-room floor,”
 And dub Herman a milksop or worse;
 He’s so manly,—your Englishman Bull.

But Herman, the scholar, to text
 Is applying his splendid physique,
 An elephant's picking up pins,
 And engrossed in not noticing ought ;
 This Earth was made for mankind,
 And Earth's in the hands of a clique,
 But these problems are troubling and posing,
 And work is his refuge from thought.

He walks at the top of his speed,
 He bolts a meal like a pill,
 He would fling Mrs. Fawcett his vote,
 He grudges the papers a glance,
 He might as well be disembodied,
 The sweets of the senses are *nil*,
 And he's always so hard at his work
 That he gives the poor Devil no chance.

I would break a leg for a look,
 But I can't for I haven't a limb.
 He's poor, I can see from his room ;
 Suppose I drop him a plum ;
 More money with most is, we know,
 But it wouldn't be surely with him,
 Better dinners and wines and cigars,
 A better-class devil in sum.

An uncle is now *in extremis*,
 I learn from a relative's note,
 And will off to this Dives and prompt
 Him how to dispose of his dollar.

Of course he's surrounded by sharks,
 But the snatchers shall get not a groat,
 And we'll see what a million will do
 In diverting the mind of a scholar.

.
 I found the rich beggar, his eyes
 In the corners all miserly creases ;
 With his kindred, his natural heirs
 And foes, he was ever at war,
 And he chuckled and died, having dished
 All the rest of his nephews and nieces
 By willing his wealth to the man
 Whom not knowing he did not abhor.

Thus Herman in spite of himself,
 And after annuities pitched
 At kinship and service aggrieved,
 After here a dot for a girl
 And there an estate for a boy,
 Is now with a million enriched ;
 He couldn't spend this on himself
 If he dined on solution of pearl.

He sits with his head in his hands
 In the room to which he returns
 For old inspiration of calm,
 And says in his haste : " Not sweet
 Or precious is money to man,
 Excepting the money one earns ;
 Not a pleasure of wealth can surpass
 The pleasure of making ends meet.

"To farm a fortune's a trade,
 A profession, a calling, an art;
 To spend it aright is to share;
 To save, nothing short of a crime;
 And to give a man ought to be Heaven,
 Whose prerogative is to impart;
 And I for this playing at God
 Have no talent, no taste and no time.

"Miss Nevil perhaps could be rich
 With caution, discretion and tact;
 A steward might manage my wealth,
 She giving my goods to the poor,
 So Herman, the Biblical Critic,
 Released from the cares that distract,
 Might hence and finish his work
 In the heart of a forest or moor."

He went to Miss Nevil at once
 And asked what he wanted to ask;
 But she—for a man should discharge,
 Whatever his Bible and creed,
 His own obligation—demurred
 In pleading unfitness for task;
 But he wouldn't take "no" to request,
 And the lady reluctant agreed.

He had gone but ran back to remark:
 "I would rather no money were paid
 To a fund for building a church,
 To a tenor for singing *Te Deum*,

To Bible and Tract propagation,
 To 'Curates' Additional Aid,'
 And Missions "; and ere she could breathe
 He was off to . . . the British Museum.

So this art and science of giving
 With problems hard of solution
 From masculine shoulders were shifted
 To those of the woman who took,
 And feared as she thought of his ban
 On Bible and Tract Distribution,
 That one so deep in the text
 Was not very fond of "the Book."

Imagine Miss Nevil at work,
 With a mountainous pile on her table
 Of primers, pamphlets, and books
 On "Art," "Education," and "Health,"
 On "Libraries," "Charwomen's Clubs,"
 And "How not to fodder and stable
 Emeritus worker and wife."
 A science's circle is wealth.

Economic was all her pursuit,
 For weeks she was rapt in research,
 Though a million were lost on the man,
 The woman might yield to my tricks ;
 Yet her piety grew, while her morning
 Was far too sacred for church,
 Since in practice of prayer as of drum
 Three hours are better than six.

But a wish to carry out his
 Beset like a baffled desire
 Her heart with the thought of what Herman
 To this or the other would say,
 With all such misgivings and fears
 As Coward my Sub. can inspire ;
 A pigmy will often creep in
 Where a giant can't win any way.

And when she was back in the Close
 She penned with the fullest detail
 An epistle to Herman of plans,
 And added perhaps it were better
 The donor disposed of his own.
 Having read it, he ran to the rail
 And steamed half a day to avoid
 The trouble of writing a letter.

He found her deep in accounts,—
 A column a mile or two long,
 And, to please her, examined them all,
 And made a point of approving
 Her actions present and future ;
 A proxy should not be wrong ;
 And both of them thrilled at a touch
 When their hands collided in moving.

With the thought of the lovers in Hell,
 Whose woes made the Florentine swoon,
 Who conned the same page when on Earth,
 Poor innocents, quite unsuspecting !

I vaulted in glee from the Pole
 In the North and over the Moon,
 And when I came down in the South
 I said to myseff, "It's delicious !

"For Miss Nevil and Herman will wed ;
 And whatever may be their pretences,
 Though woman is soulful and pure
 And man is stripling-like supple,
 A heaven intervenes betwixt these ;
 On the single ground of their senses,
 The Saint and the Scholar will meet
 Like an amorous, commonplace couple.

"She was the first to love ;
 In prayer for success to her plans,
 In prayer for the founder to boot,
 I remember she blushed on her knees :
 And a woman but looks and a swain
 Is off to publish the banns,
 For his head is quite turned with the love
 Of her whom he happens to please.

"Yes, Herman will offer his hand
 —In momentous affairs he's so fast ;
 Which she will refuse for his sake
 —A saint is always so nice,
 Lest his mate be not also his match,
 Not seeing her own is a caste
 Above his, for the male has a sin ;
 Excess is the masculine vice.

“ If he do not guzzle he gorges,
Or smokes in his bed or does worse ;
If the fruit of a tree were forbidden,
Not Eve but Adam would crave it,
And have it by hook or by crook,
And entail on his offspring a curse ;
And Morally Better is better,
I give my fiend’s affidavit.

“ My Herman will hide while he wooes
His cloven heretical hoof,
Will think as she thinks and—alas !—
Without intent to deceive,
And when she surrenders in time,
She will trust him, not put him to proof
In his faith or his want of it ; women
Believe what they wish to believe.

“ When all her scruples are quashed
And the lady has plighted her troth,
And her lover persuades her to wed
On a holiday—half or a quarter,
A marriage of sense not of soul,
Will prove abhorrent to both,
And they’ll seek to approach in their minds
By some avenue longer or shorter.

“ When she shares his life in the day
And dreams in the night by his side,
She can’t and she won’t pitch her tent
In an opposite camp of the field,

She'll abandon each possible point :

For it is not the stronger will guide,
It is not the weaker will rule ;
It is the more loving will yield.

“ In the laudable wish for accord,
She'll avail herself of her spouse,
And learning what now she'll not learn,
And after ineffable qualms,
She'll fling up the whole with the part,
When in spite of her Lord she allows
Not Moses the writer of Law,
Nor David the singer of Psalms.”

.
Well, the more the couple arranged,
The more there was to arrange ;
Her horizon broadened with his,
Who threw aside text for the while,
Read the Bible instead, and the Bards ;
Looked dreamy, wistful and strange,
And in absence, not absence, would live
On a word or a look or a smile.

When rapid in all but the text,
The scholar demanded response
To the fervent request she would walk
With himself to the stars across earth,
The reason alleged for Miss Nevil's
Refusal of love for the nonce
Was not Herman's heretical book
But her womanly sense of unworth.

Such a reason of course couldn't hold ;
And wedded each nature imbibes
In contact the nature espoused,
For beings unlike are indued,
In approach, with each other, although
I swear not that Herman subscribes
To the creed of his wife in the lump,
But still with her faith he's imbued.

Who would doctor a person in health ?
What Protestant proselyte alter
That " Allah " of Islamite saint ?
What Biblical critic pervert
His beautiful wife from her faith,
Though David didn't sing Psalter,
Nor consult her in matters divine
As an amateur should an expert ?

My prediction's fulfilled but in part ;
Nothing falls as we dreaded or wished :
She leads him where she is strong,
And is guided where she is weak.
I made the match, and yet I
With my luck diabolic am dished,
For he goes to church with his wife,
And she tackles the text in the Greek.

THE HOUR OF DEATH

Uom, se' tu grande o vil ? Muori, e il saprai.—ALFIERI.

ONE thing in life, and only one, is certain,
And that is death, which cannot be an evil
Because, said Cicero, it is universal ;
Indeed the death of tyrants is a blessing
To servants freed from an oppressive master,
To wives emancipated from their husbands,
To children liberated from their fathers ;
Let me not make my death a boon to others.

To me the gains are negative, or mainly ;
The positive I leave to babes and sucklings,
I made a list of these when I was callow :
We know far less at forty than at twenty,
Losing our life in learning and unlearning,
Until we doubt the very " facts of science,"
Our patient Darwin's Origin of Species,
Our gentle Newton's Laws of Gravitation.

Dying, I give good riddance to my body,
To dressing and re-dressing and undressing,
Whose net result is ugliness and folly
—Boys in their " chimney pots " ; all men in
" bowlers " ;
Ladies on heels like stilts, in trains like besoms,
On the tight rack, like fashion plates, of corsets,
Ringing the changes of their endless blouses ;
Old bodies in black satin and white laces.

Dying, I look to suffer no more winters,
No nipping frosts of "seasonable weather,"
No bitter blasts, though some profess to love them
And sea fowl revel in them,—stern nor'-easters ;
I shall have done with pain in nerve and muscle,
Which never did me any good I know of ;
Unless to make me carnal, selfish, trifling,
And leave me bare of spirit is a blessing.

The sight of others' pain I cannot lessen,
I hope no more to witness—larks in cages,
Live cocks in crates ; beasts hunted, overladen,
And driven bleating, lowing to the slaughter :
I cannot bear for him my fellow's sorrows,
Like one the prophet spake of, who was happy,—
Happiest in this, in this to be most envied,
Because he bore for them the griefs of others.

And since my hearing makes me more splenetic
Than all my other senses put together,
Shall I not smile to part from those whose voices
Speaking or singing what they will afflict me,
From those that self-engrossed ignore our presence
With insolent hum ; our ears, alas ! are lidless :
There's a door banged ! Well, even in excluding
He'll spare me that,—Saint Peter at the portal.

My blood relations will be mine no longer ;
And won't he rave, my avaricious cousin,
At learning I have sunk my father's savings ;
Not that I grudge my friends my little leavings ;

May she have most that cares the least to have them !
Shall the dead hand release its hold on treasure ?
Shall other than myself possess my Homer,
My secret stream that breaks to blue in Surrey ?

One of these days I shall have slipt my collar,
The life I lead for which I am least fitted,
Business and drudgery, my abomination.
The tutor will escape refractory pupils ;
The felon and the Pope, the gaol and palace ;
The well-nigh lunatic, the fear of phrensy ;
The thief and homicide, the hounds behind him ;
The woman shamed, the cruelty of women.

Once dead, I shall have lost the dread of dying,
The thought of death and further incarnation ;
The risk for man of being born a woman,
A mother overworked, a wife neglected,—
The risk of being born his own, and better
Than such rebirth were blank annihilation
To punish the incorrigibly wicked,
Whose Hell were nothing save anticipation.

Still, while the gains of losses are so many,
Death has a tiresome trick of interrupting
Life in the middle of a sentence, leaving
Our letters still unburnt, our wills unwritten.
My death, however tedious, will be sudden ;
End where it may, my work will not be finished ;
Die when I will, *I* shall not be completed :
Which haply is a pledge for life hereafter.

The lifelong union of the soul and body
Broken at last, I bid farewell to parting,—
The pain alike in going and in coming.
Would that fast friends were outward bound together
And met on further shore ! It is this loving,
This being loved, that lends to Death his terrors,
And gives us an excuse for living longer :
I am fain to see my friend safe through before me.

Better that I than she should bear the sorrow,
The anguish, of outliving the beloved,
Provided that the dead are not bereaven ;
Still if not mine but hers the pang of parting,
Better she love me less than grieve too greatly :
Though one may love the dead and not be wretched,
Blessing the world by living brightly in it,—
The world at large so welcome to forget me.

Almost as good as being quite forgotten
Were it to read *post-obits* in the papers,—
Those pleasant things that no one ever tells us
For fear we be too glad and hoity-toity.
My neighbours will bethink them they are mortal,
My friends forget my faults and canonise me,
My foes forgive my virtues most aggressive,
My critics own I was “ a sort of poet.”

Applaud me, like an actor said Augustus
To those that stood around the dying Cæsar ;
For men will clap or hiss us at our exit,
Not knowing our most inner being, whether

A charnel or a holiest of holies ;
For men, as did our Maker, trust our honour
To keep our thoughts as comely as our actions.
No verdict on us but our own acquits us.

Life was a losing game ; 'twas brave to play it
When Death must win it ! have we played it bravely ?
Our dying moments—with their stern revisals,
Their bitter summing up with life receding
Seen as a whole—shall answer us, revealing
The littleness of things that loomed so largely,
The nothingness of dreams that dominated,
The unreality of the material.

Fool others, Wealth and Fame and Power and Pleasure,
Me you will fool no more : if these are phantoms,
Art thou not fooled, O Man ? Is this one worthy
Whom thou hast sought, or that whom thou hast
 slighted ?

And must thou die to know it, since in dying
All men regain their reason, like La Mancha's
Lunatic lover, late, too late, and idly
If death be death and life have no thereafter.

O my dear Moorland swept with light and shadow,
Suffused in bloom of rime or flushed with heather,
Shall I that loved to wake at night and feel you
Dreaming your life, so breathing-close beside me,—
Shall I that knew your every mood and treasured,—
Shall I that loved you so, lie here regardless,—
Here at your foot and sleep, without distinction
Of day and night, the sleep that lasts for ever ?

Shall she whom I have loved so long and truly,
Shall she be sorry and I not be sorry ?
Shall she remember and I not remember ?
Shall she love on and I love her no longer ?
Well, well, I would, if this be so, confront it,
But when I fairly question life hereafter,
I doubt my doubt, and find that not believing
Is even harder to me than believing.

Diffused I may be, but destroyed I cannot.
Yet though the hope be high, the faith is feeble
In life outliving death that is not Christian.
The Flower of heroes, poets, saints and martyrs,
The Man divine, who should have known, if any,
Promised his faithful following life æonian,
On His authority, with that veracious
“ Had it been otherwise, I would have told you.”

Christian or not, forbid us not conjecture
Of life continued in a risen body
Freed from the power that keeps us planetarian ;
And what is planetarian but parochial ?
Grant us within us an ethereal body
Which after death this *I* shall hold coherent,—
This *I* persistent through so many bodies,
After its fleshly mansion's dissolution.

Shall I with joy take up at once my freedom
Of all the Universe ? or shall I linger
For those that tremble on emancipation ?
Shall I not—like the parent bird that flutters

About the cage of its imprisoned fledgling—
Hover around my friend, my love who loves me,
My lonely mate, who weeps for my departure,
Not knowing I am nearer now than ever.

Shall I not flash like light to join my father,
Whom I have never seen on this side Hades,
The man whom I have loved the most, my genius,
For whom I have been breath and blood and members,
Who hath at times borrowed my very body.
But having done my mother an unkindness,
Or let her die not knowing that I loved her,
How shall I meet my father's eyes in Hades ?

Shall I not look upon the sweet departed ?—
The genial " Wizard of the North," and " Elia "
Still in his saint's undress with " Bridget " near him ;
Lovable bards of Ayr, of Ouse, of Avon ;—
Lovable saints of Italy and Ireland ;—
Lovable heroes—Bayard, blameless, fearless,
And the Lord Admiral Nelson, who in dying
Wins every heart with his last " Kiss me, Hardy."

Shall I behold the beings whom I worship ?—
The fire-, not ice-, pure woman, Charlotte Brontë ;
Sappho, supreme in song, the only lover
Of all her sex that ever loved a woman ;
The Maid of Orleans that to Heaven ascended
In the fire chariot of the blessed martyrs ;
Mary who broke the box of alabaster ;
Buddha and Christ—the great misrepresented.

I hope to see the failures in the Bible,
More picturesque, perhaps no worse, than others :—
The Wanderer with the brand upon his forehead ;
The King with his belied ideal troubled ;
The Queen that loved her Syrian gods not wisely ;
The Traitor who for money sold his Master,
And hanged himself thereafter, now forgiven
By every heart of flesh, and God the Father.

One half expects to meet the fair creations
Of poets dead, as Dante did in Vision :—
The noblest of all maidens, daughters, sisters,
Antigone ; the wife of wives, Alcestis ;
The woman of all women, Desdemona ;
The warrior with his reverence for ladies,
Coriolanus ; Romola : Heaven save me
If she detect in me the soul of Tito !

I half expect to light upon Hernani
And Doña Sol, their nuptials consummated,
With Max and Thekla and heroic lovers
That perished through their pious sense of honour ;
Don Quixote in the swing of all his fancies ;
With iridescent Ariel and Undine ;
And—lacking whom life would be dull and dreary—
Puck, Pistol, Falstaff, Faustus and the Devil.

But God forgive me if I seem to question
His power without Mephisto to divert us ;
Doth He not, from our entrance till our exit,
Keep us, His millions, with our million tempers,

At least amused with life however grievous ?
Shall He not cater for our entertainment
Through lives to come, in universal travel
And converse with the wise of all the ages.

The larger range, the longer in exhausting,
Less brief than this may be the life that follows,
Say what they will,—Theosophists and Buddhists ;
But whether it shall last for hours or ages,
The life ethereal, even as the fleshly,
Is plainly an untenable position,
A cause, a battle, lost from the beginning,
Which we defend and fight as if for ever.

The frame thereafter may be finer, stronger
Than that of Ether, passing our conception ;
And after many lives in many bodies,
If we begin each life where we have ended
The one that went before it, what progression
Infinite may be man's, what glorious beings
We may become, advanced from cherubs, seraphs,
Archangels, Virtues, Powers to gods the deathless.

At last this *I*, held back by many bodies,
May liberate itself from all soever,
Being pure motion only, yea, vibration,
A thrill—delicious here and here prophetic—
A thrill of God Himself through all creation,
And thus with all creation coextensive,—
A thrill of bliss that mortal may not measure,
No, nor in dream, the most divine, imagine.

After this life and death, or after many
A life and death hereafter, sooner, later,
—Would it were sooner!—shall this being, blended
With all it loves, be merged in the Eternal,
Which now this passion for the next foreshadows,—
The passion of the torrent for the ocean,—
The passion of the self, thus isolated
And individual, for the Universal.

MY BIRTHDAY

Nous attendons sans cesse l'heure suivante,
le jour suivant, l'année suivante. Il nous faut
à la fin une vie suivante.—DE SENANCOUR'S *Obermann*.

WHAT to the world or me,
Mabyn my own,
Boots my nativity,
Mabyn my own ?
While I with fear forecast
Future from bodeful Past,
Is it a feast or fast,
Mabyn my own.

Drawing with every breath
Farther from birth,
Nearer and nearer death,
Shall I with mirth
Rather than mourning keep
Days that remorseless sweep
Me to my dreamless sleep
Somewhere in Earth ?

Shall I now life is dear,
Mabyn my own,
Welcome the flying year,
Mabyn my own ?

Musing the while that I,—
I that have you, must die,
Give you my last good-bye,
Mabyn my own.

Often I pause perplext :
What do we crave,
Eager to greet the next ;
Is it the grave ?
Why does the heart impel
Whither the brain knows well
Stands the dread sentinel
Death that we brave ?

Seeing we would not wait,
Mabyn my own,
Even with blissful fate,
Mabyn my own,
What if in reason's spite,
Blind feeling for the light
Lead our poor hearts aright,
Mabyn my own.

Rivers desire the main ;
Also the soul
Parted from God is fain,
Fain for the Whole ;
Over the bar of doom,
Over the bourne of tomb,
Sweep we to light, not gloom :
God is our goal.

Therefore let joy prevail,

 Mabyn my own.

Let us our birthdays hail,

 Mabyn my own,

Nearer in flight so fleet

Union intense and sweet,—

Fusion of souls complete,

 Mabyn my own.

MY CHRISTMAS ROSE

. . . When the way is long and cold,
And cruel seem the ways of men,
And you are weary, sad and old,
Come then.—J. A. MIDDLETON.

THE leaves have long been blown before the blast ;
The rosy fruit is ravished from the bough ;
The fair procession of the flowers is past,
And none is left me now.

My hyacinth another plucked and took,
The lily would not in my garden grow,
My roses shattered in my hands, and look,
The hills are white with snow.

But, as I pace my bare and flowerless walks,
Shall I lament my blossoms' brief estate ?
They would have died ere this and left their stalks
Deflowered and desolate.

Nay, what half-hid by leaves, that are not frail,
On stem, that is not weak, so bravely blows
When other flowers are dead ?—It is the pale
Bell of the Christmas Rose.

Far be it from me, Flower, to tear aside
The leaves that still shall serve thee for defence ;
Bloom to thyself and God : nor would I chide
Beautiful reticence.

“Give sorrow words,” that sorrow may be less ;
Wherefore give joy and love and worship none,
Lest these and all their dew-like loveliness
Evaporate in the sun.

Pure and not cold thou springest from the sod ;
The white light is the sum of all the seven
Splendours that span the skies, the light of God,
Whose other name is Heaven.

Trust me, for I have lived, beloved Flower,
Not to defile with touch or mar with breath
Treasure reserved by God against mine hour
Of winter, age and death.

Others, and what I felt for them, forecast
Thee, and my passion for thy purity,
Strength and reserve ; all loves are in the last,
And all I loved in thee.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Wer keine Erinnerung hat
Kann auch keine Hoffnung haben.—GOETHE.

WHEN I look into the Past
—the holy writ of years,—
Pages bright as painted Missal,—
pages blurred with tears ;

Be the test of annals fair
and clear or stained and blurred,
I, that cannot, would not alter
or erase a word.

Here is sequence maugre meddling,
judgment spite of prayer ;
And, by every token, to One Hand
the pages swear.

Thus the whole creation,
nobly-mannered in design,
Bears the *Deus fecit*,—"God,
His mark," His mark divine.

Shell, the waif of Ocean, parted
from its fellow glows,
Petal-like in finish, with the
hues that tint the rose.

Plume of foam and feathers, flame
of flower and flower of flame,
Vein of leaf and branch of artery,
speak to God the same.

He that piles the Alp of cloud
upheaves the Alp of snow,
Rolls the hills and billows,
rules my pulse's ebb and flow.

He that with unfollowed fleetness
on their trackless ways
Whirled the suns and planets, is
the God that shapes my days.

Dipped in light and shadow, Earth
is speeding to her goal ;
Now in light and now in shadow,
moves the silent soul.

Is our Maker like a poet
with his poems smitten ?
Will He like the Sibyl scatter
us as soon as written ?

He shall still be That not Ending
which was not begun,
Though we disappear and perish
like the centuries run.

Sculptor still surpasses statue ;
novelist, narration ;
Painter, picture ; poet, poem ;
God, the whole creation.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Though a passage hard to master
in the page is cast,
Even pain is sweet as pleasure
when the pain is past.

Very failure is success, the
school for God's unskilled,
More than fairest aim achieved
or fondest dream fulfilled.

Man—the strongest most—applauds
the struggle God ordains,
Counting blows caresses, curses
blessings, losses gains.

Therefore when my heart is failing
with the fear of grief,
Shrinking from the forward,
then I turn the backward leaf.

Thus I gather strength and courage
for the coming years,
And I close the Bible bright as
Missal, blurred with tears.

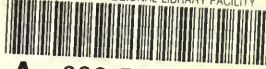
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